

THE  
ILL EFFECTS  
OF A  
RASH VOW;  
A NOVEL,  
In a SERIES of LETTERS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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L O N D O N:

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THE  
ILL EFFECTS  
OF  
A RASH VOW.

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MRS. HERBERT,

TO

MISS MONTAGUE.

*Brook-Street.*

MR. Albert has paid the debt of nature, and left Mr. Herbert sole guardian to his two daughters—his last request was that we should take the eldest, who is eighteen years of age, under our

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protection,

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protection, and leave the youngest in the convent of St. Clare. I now claim your promise of attending me to France, if ever pleasure or business led me there. Mr. Herbert insists upon my accompanying him to receive his ward. — I think with horror on the passage from Dover to Calais, and nothing but your presence can enable me to bear it with tolerable fortitude.—I own my weakness—yet cannot conquer it; no,

*Though the Omnipotent o'er sea and land,  
Alike in tender mercy does command.*

Though I adore his providence, and behold him in the light of an indulgent parent to wretched mortals in this vale of tears, yet my heart vibrates with terror when I think of consigning myself even in a vessel on the surface of the deep and tremendous ocean.

Will you, my dear friend, pity my weakness, and by your dear society and  
foothing

soothing tenderness lessen these foolish apprehensions, and assist me to force reason to re-assume her sway. Inform me soon as possible whether I shall have the consolation of your dear company in a voyage and journey I so unwillingly undertake.

LAURA HERBERT.

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MISS ALBERT,

T O

LADY ALMERINA.

*Convent de St. Clare.*

I AM daily, nay hourly expecting a release from this hated prison, where I have been confined these four long years. With what rapture shall I again return to my native city, to my dear Almerina, and to unbounded conquest over the lords of the creation. Haik!—a carriage stops.—

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My

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My guardian leading out as ugly a female as ever your eyes beheld!—Mrs. Herbert, I suppose, she will be a more delightful foil—By her side I shall appear the goddess of beauty.

*Paris.*

You will undoubtedly scarce credit me when I tell you, then, in the midst of my joy at leaving St. Clare, I actually dropped tears of sorrow—"a paradox" true; but I must have been a stoic, indeed, not to have been affected at poor Fanny's agony, who was almost inconsolable at being left behind. For a moment I, in idea, exchanged situations with her, and found her grief so well founded, that I cannot express the disagreeable sensations I felt. I said every thing I could to console her, and Mr. Herbert was so kind as to promise she should sometimes visit my friend, Madame D'Arcy, who is lately married, and lives in this gay metropolis.

The

The *foil* I mentioned proved to be a Miss Montague, Mrs. Herbert's most intimate friend ; the constitution of the latter being delicate, she was indisposed with the fatigue of her journey, therefore Miss Montague insisted upon her staying here to recover, while she attended Mr. Herbert to St. Clare.

Miss Montague is chearful and good-humoured, which makes the plainness of her person on acquaintance become less observable, and she insensibly claims one's friendship,

Mrs. Herbert is near seven and twenty, tall, and elegantly formed—her features are not quite regular ; but she is fair—has very expressive fine eyes, and such an undescribable grace in her manner, that she, without intention, I dare say, gains many hearts. She plays on the harp and piano-forte with great taste, and sings to the heart, so that, instead of a *foil*, I fear I



have met with a rival who will allure my captives from my chains.

I begin to sincerely love Mrs. Herbert, who has sensibility and tenderness enough to tame a savage breast; yet, I fear, she receives little attention from a husband unworthy of her. I hinted as much to Miss Montague, who shook her head, and promised at some future period to give me some anecdotes concerning her; for how such an agreeable woman became united to such a man is to me surprising — disproportion of years — every thing makes it astonishing, as she was an heiress. We are constantly engaged in the amusements of Paris, and I have a few Counts in my train — one seems ready to desert, and lay himself at the feet of Madame Herbert, who is quite ignorant of his intention, and as unambitious of conquest as a widow at fourscore. Count Salnore attends us to the Opera to-night — he is a pretty fellow, but a Frenchman suits not

not my taste—an English husband will be  
most acceptable to

Your sincere, &c.

H. ALBERT.

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MISS ALBERT,

T O

LADY ALMERIA.

*Brook-Street.*

**M**Y guardian, seized with a fit of  
jealousy at the Marquis de Salen's  
complimenting Mrs. Herbert on her per-  
formance on the harp, hurried us away  
from Paris — He fancied de Salen be-  
stowed impassioned looks on her: I think  
he was mistaken in his conjecture; but if  
he had cast his eyes on Count Melfleur,  
who stood behind the Marquis, he would  
have found *real* impassioned looks, as the



Count was absorbed in silent admiration, with his eyes fixed on Mrs. H—— like a Cymon. Mrs. Herbert, in the passage from Calais to Dover, looked like a petrification of the image of terror — No murmurs escaped her — yet she seemed apprehensive of danger in speaking as well as moving. What a monster is Herbert to force her thus to suffer!—She is *too* dutiful a wife in my opinion.

Miss Montague has favoured me with the promised anecdotes concerning her friend.—I will transcribe them in Miss Montague's own words, which were as follow :

“ Precipitate marriages has too frequently laid a foundation for misery thro' life, my dear Miss Albert; and as you are young, and just entering the world, take the advice of an old maid (for at thirty I may call myself so) and *with caution wed*. Mrs. Herbert was the only child of Captain and Mrs. Fortescue,  
who

who both dying when she was young, left her to the care and guardianship of her aunt by the mother's side (the Dowager Lady Horton) with a fortune of ten thousand pounds.

Lord Horton and Captain Fortescue were intimate friends, and had married two sisters on account of their beauty, daughters to a hosier, who had no fortune to bestow on them.

Mrs. Fortescue was possessed of sensibility and a softness of manners; but Lady Horton was naturally vulgar, and prided herself in beauty, thinking that the want of it was the greatest misfortune a female could suffer. After Lord Horton's death she led a very retired life, as people of rank were disgusted at her vulgarity—and she was too proud to associate with her inferiors in rank of life.

Captain and Mrs. Fortescue died in the same week at Spa, and consigned their

B 5

beloved

beloved child to the care of a faithful friend, of very small fortune, called Mrs. Montrose. This amiable woman conveyed her young charge to England, and was kindly received by Lady Horton, who soon became so partial to her, that she requested that Lady to reside with her, and act as Governess to her niece. Mrs. Montrose had a brother, a clergyman, who had a small living in the city.—Lady Horton gave him a pressing invitation to visit them without ceremony as often as agreeable to him—which, as he had a true fraternal regard for his sister, he took advantage of, and frequently attended them.

Mrs. Herbert, at a very early age, had a taste for literature, and at six years old, at her own request, was taught the Latin tongue by Mr. Montrose, in which she soon made a great progress. Her Ladyship, sensible of her deficiency, determined her niece should be quite accomplished.—She was taught French, Italian, geography, music,

music, dancing, &c. and learnt all with avidity.

Miss Fortescue was thin and pale, which was contrary to Lady Horton's idea of tolerable beauty. — She herself was a large woman, and had a very great colour. — Laura had only a transient bloom, and she thought no one could be handsome that had not a form and complexion like her own. “ This girl, she used to say, will make a very ugly woman — she will look like a skeleton or ghost, and never marry to advantage ; but it shall be my care she shall not be plainer than nature formed her ;” for which reason she had her inoculated, that she might not be disfigured by that enemy to beauty, the small-pox.

When Miss Fortescue was about twelve years of age, my father being just dead, my mother and self left Ireland, and went to reside in Brook-Street. — Mrs. Montrose was an old friend of my mother's, and as

Lady Horton thought us not beneath her notice, an intimacy succeeded.

Lady Horton, as I before mentioned, led a very retired life — it was become habitual to her — and she could not be persuaded to visit us when we had company.

As Miss Fortescue grew older, my mother endeavoured to persuade Lady Horton it was necessary her niece should be introduced into company, to give a finish to her education — as without it she could not attain that ease and elegance of behaviour necessary for her situation in life.

“ My God! returned her Ladyship, what signifies talking—the girl is so ugly she has no chance for a husband.— Bless me! she is quite ugly.”

Pardon me, Madam, said my mother, she is accomplished, elegantly formed, and  
possessed



possessed of the graces which often attract more sincere admiration and homage than perfect beauty — besides society must be advantageous to her —.

Lady Horton interrupted Mrs. Montague, by exclaiming — she is so ugly! which her Ladyship had frequently uttered before, to my beloved friend, who to this day cannot help thinking herself one of the plainest of women.

My mother, with extreme difficulty, got permission for Laura sometimes to attend us to public amusements, company, &c.

When Miss Fortescue was near seventeen years of age, my dear mother was seized with a severe indisposition, and was ordered by her physicians to reside in the country : — She therefore took a house near Windsor.

This

This separation was almost a heart-breaking to dear Laura and myself. We promised to correspond constantly, and that promise was performed.

Mrs. Herbert, at that period, had a great flow of spirits—the remains of it you still perceive, though she has suffered much affliction. We had introduced her to Lord and Lady Seymour, our near relations, who were extremely partial to her. This worthy couple had two daughters, about twelve and thirteen years of age, and a son, at that period, about eleven. Laura accommodated herself to the humours of my young cousins, and frequently joined them at forfeits, or other childish plays, to amuse them, which won their hearts. Charles Seymour used to call her his dear little love.”

When my mother and self left town, Lady Seymour requested Lady Horton to permit Miss Fortescue to visit her young family as usual, which was granted. The  
period



period of my friend's sorrows then commenced, the valuable and beloved Mrs. Montrose was suddenly carried off by a fever, and Lara remained for some time inconsolable.

To rouse her from this deep melancholy, Lady Horton permitted her often to visit Lady Seymour—That worthy Lady soothed her grief—It began to subside, and her usual spirits return, when her Ladyship informed her with cautious tenderness, she and Lord Seymour were going to reside in Ireland some years. This was a fresh subject of sorrow—she looked like a statue of despair.—I shall then be wretched, indeed, Madam, said she; “I shall have no society—no friends, and must lead a solitary life.”

Lady Seymour endeavoured to comfort her, and, by way of checking the first impulse of disagreeable sensation, proposed going to the play that evening. Places were taken—Lord and Lady Seymour,  
Charles

Charles and Miss Fortescue, went. The entertainment was a Pantomime. — Unfortunately the scenes took fire—a confusion ensued, and every body strove to get out of the house.

My friends got safe under the Piazza, at Covent-Garden Theatre, and was endeavouring to get forwards to their carriage, when the croud suddenly parted Laura from her company, and she was pushed against a house door, where in agony she exclaimed—“Where is Lady Seymour? Oh! how shall I get to the carriage?” A young officer, rather intoxicated with liquor, stared at her, and said, “A most elegant figure! ’pon my soul—I will protect you, my charmer;” and, ringing a bell at the infamous house they stood at, the door opened, when, putting his arm round her waist, he strove to push her into the passage.

In horror at his insolence, she shrieked out “Murder.”—He had forced her into the  
the

the passage, and was going to shut the door, when Lord Seymour (who had seen his Lady and Son safe into the carriage) came in search of her, and luckily arrived that moment at the place.

With a stern countenance his Lordship bid the officer release her, who, knowing his rank, and fearful of the consequence of detaining her, complied.

Lady Seymour was under dreadful anxiety concerning her young friend, and was overjoyed at her safe return. — Charles kissed her hand, and said, “ Indeed, indeed, I am glad we have found you safe, my dear little love.”

The next day Laura, to her great surprise, received a letter from the hero of the preceding night; it contained an apology for his behaviour, and a bombastic effusion of love.

In a pet she threw it into the fire—when Lady Horton (who had not perceived the servant present her the letter) seeing her much confused, and out of humour, demanded the cause, and what that paper contained.

Lord and Lady Seymour, on parting the night before, had persuaded her to conceal the incident from Lady Horton, as her Ladyship might, perhaps, make it a pretext for Laura's not visiting them again while they remained in town. She had been silent, but, now, fearful of Capt. Obrien's becoming troublesome, she determined to inform Lady Horton of his impertinent epistle.

Her Ladyship was extremely ill-humoured at the intelligence. Had you seen quality at home, said she, it would not have happened; last night he attacked you through vile motives: He continues the pursuit in hopes of your fortune; for, depend upon it, we shall find he is an Irish fortune-

fortune-hunter. You well know, child, you are unfortunately so ugly, no man can possibly be seized with a sudden passion for your person : However, you must not expect to attend Lady Seymour to any more plays ; nor, indeed, shall I permit you to go there again without me.

Miss Fortescue wept at her aunt's unkindness, and, ringing the bell, ordered the servant never in future to take in a letter directed to her, which was brought by a stranger.

Lady Horton commended her prudence.—Her ill-humour subsided, yet she would not suffer Laura to go to Lady Seymour's but once, and that was to take a formal leave of her before she set out for Ireland.

Not long before that period, Lady Horton had got acquainted with a Mrs. Spearman, a widow Lady of genteel fortune, who was a rigid methodist. Her  
Ladyship,



Ladyship, whose intellects were weak, soon became a convert; a great intimacy ensued, and they became almost inseparable. They went to different conventicles two or three times a week. Miss Fortescue thought it her duty to obey her aunt in all reasonable commands; but would not give a sanction to illiterate hypocrisy, or honour such places with her presence, consequently she began to lead a very unhappy life with Lady Horton.

One evening that her Ladyship was with her dear Mrs. Spearman, Laura was sitting as usual alone in the parlour reading, when the door burst open, and Capt. Obrien flung himself at her feet; he upbraided her with her cruelty, in refusing to receive any letters from him—said he was compelled immediately to quit England, and that despair had forced him into her presence to sue for mercy.

His language was so disgusting, and his visit so unwished for, that she immediately

ately rung the bell.—You have intruded yourself into my presence, Sir, said she, therefore cannot be surprised if I desire the servant to open the door for you. — The servant entered; he hastily arose. It is well, Madam, said he, a time of revenge may come—then you will sue to me.—So saying, he fled away in a violent rage.

She ordered Lucy to attend her. This young woman had been well educated, and was an officer's daughter, who had been left destitute, and compelled to go to service, though Laura did, and still you know does, regard her more as a companion than servant.

Lucy found her mistress much distressed, at Capt. Obrian's visit, well knowing she should have a severe lecture on the occasion from her aunt.

This faithful young woman said every thing she could to lessen my friend's apprehensions.



prehenſions. Indeed, ſhe was her chief comfort, as I was abſent, and ſhe was not allowed ſociety with any one but Mrs. Spearman.

Upon her Ladyſhip's return to ſupper, Laura informed her of what had paſſed. She laid the blame on her niece, and ſaid ſhe certainly muſt have given him encouragement, or he would not have dared enter her houſe; but ſhe would take care to convey her far enough from him, as dear Mrs. Spearman and ſhe had determined to reſide together; and, for the benefit of health, had taken a houſe, called Villa Burton, near Bath, which place they ſhould ſoon ſet out for, and quit London intirely. This was very unpleaſing news to my Laura, as it would remove her farther from me. She was but young, and wanted three or four years of being of age.—The thoughts of ſo long a captivity funk her ſpirits much.

In

In a month's time they went to Villa-Burton. The old Ladies were charmed with the situation; it was but a mile from Bath, where there were preachers to their taste in plenty. The gardens were extensive, and laid out in a romantic stile. Laura was permitted to wander in them as much as she pleased with Lucy — but not allowed to go without the gates, except in a carriage two or three times a week, with Lady Horton.

The cant of methodism, and frequent company of itinerant preachers, almost exhausted poor Laura's patience. — My Mother wrote to request her company at Windsor; but Lady Horton refused her consent. Laura endeavoured to divert her chagrin with books, music, drawing, &c. in vain; for the old Ladies persecuted her so constantly, in hopes of converting her, that it imbittered every rational amusement. Thus did my dear Laura pass her days in disquiet. When a twelvemonth had elapsed in this manner,  
my

my Mother, finding by her letters that she was quite miserable—determined to take a furnished house at Bath for three months, purposely to afford her a temporary relief. We thought her Ladyship could not refuse admitting us, or letting her niece visit us during our stay at Bath, which would be so near Villa Burton.

With joy at the idea of this gleam of comfort to my dear friend, I sat down to write, and inform her of our intention — when, unfortunately, a letter arrived to inform us my aunt Dormer was dying, and earnestly requested to see my Mother in Ireland.

I wept at the disappointment of my hopes, said Miss Montague, shedding tears; and I now weep at the thoughts of that unfortunate journey; since, if our design had been fulfilled, my amiable and charming friend would never have been the wife of Mr. Herbert. — We should have been present to have offered  
our

our advice, and my brother knew sufficient of Mr. Herbert to have assured her he was unworthy her hand.

I sat down with a heavy heart, to inform Laura we were immediately setting out for Dublin, and, as some comfort to her, promised we would come to Bath immediately on our return to England, if it pleased the Almighty to spare our lives.

On the very day Miss Fortescue received my letter, Mr. Herbert arrived at Bath, and Mrs. Spearman being a near relation, went to Villa Burton to pay his compliments to her. She and Lady Horton were gone to chapel, but Laura was alone in the parlour playing on the piano forte.

The servant having informed him Mrs. Spearman was expected home in half an hour—he determined to wait for her return, and was extremely struck with Miss Fortescue's melodious voice and accompaniment as he entered the parlour. Think-

ing it was only one of the servants, she continued playing till weary, when, upon rising from the instrument, she was astonished at perceiving a stranger.

He made an apology for his intrusion—thanked her for the pleasure she had afforded him, and was further complimenting her when the old Ladies arrived.

Mrs. Spearman expressed pleasure at seeing him, and introduced him to Lady Horton as her near relation.—Mrs. Spearman was so great a favourite with her Ladyship, that her will was law.—He had a cordial invitation to spend as much of his time as was agreeable, at Villa Burton. We have reason to suppose the hypocritical Mrs. Spearman invited him there for the purpose of securing Laura and her fortune.

He took advantage of their civility, for Laura at that period certainly had made an impression on his heart.—Her captivating



vating manner, my dear Miss Albert, you know is great.—He determined, if possible, to gain her affection.

Mr. Herbert frequently had the liberty of walking alone with her in the garden, and, under the mask of friendship, took opportunities to condole with her on her unhappy situation, till he found she received him with marks of friendship. He then ventured to disclose his passion, lamenting the difference of years between them (he was fifty) which, perhaps, might be an obstacle, he said. At the same time he assured her, that in bestowing her hand on him she would gain her liberty, and be sole mistress of her actions, as his wish was to redeem her from slavery.

There was a seeming sincerity in his manner which pleased her. He was past the heigh-day of youth, and she thought in all probability would retain an affection for her, and younger men might not, as her aunt had convinced her her person was

Situated as she was, she was miserable.— His person was agreeable, and she consented he should make proposals to Lady Horton.

Mrs. Spearman was employed to open the business. — Mr. Herbert had been very extravagant in youth, for which reason a rich old uncle had left him only an annuity of seven hundred a year ; it was therefore only in his power to settle her own fortune on her, which he consented to do.

Lady Horton complied with her dear Mrs. Spearman's request. — Settlements were drawn. — Mrs. Spearman presented Laura with her jewels, and in six weeks she became the wife of Mr. Herbert. Thus did she suddenly throw herself into permanent bondage, in hopes of gaining liberty.

Mr. Herbert at that period doated on her: He introduced her to his acquaintance in town, among whom were relations  
of



of her Father's, Mr. and Mrs. Nugent, a very gay couple, who lived in high ton, and was much pleased with my dear Laura.

At first my dear friend was diverted with continual engagements, but they left a weariness and vacancy, which, to a mind so pure and refined as hers, was disgusting. She found no real friendship, and very unrespectfully received the flattery of coxcombs, which shocked and offended her. I thought, my dear Harriot, would she often say afterwards, the plainness of my person would have exempted me from attacks of gallantry; but I see that the folly and hope of invading another's property to boast of conquest, renders not even an *ugly* woman sacred.

She had a sincere affection for her husband, but he soon grew weary of her. Mr. Herbert had always retained libertine principles; matrimony did not alter them, and in three months he visited his former

mistress, who he had been connected with many years, and who had a settlement of eight hundred a year from her late Lord L——. His reattachment to this woman soured his temper at home; he began to treat Mrs. Herbert privately with fullness and ill-nature, and being of a jealous disposition, and connected with the most infamous of our sex, he grew suspicious of every amusement she took abroad, though he had not resolution to lay her under any restriction. She perceived it, and passed her time more in private, tho' Mrs. Nugent pressed her to the contrary. This conduct seemed to satisfy him.

One evening, being engaged to sup with his favourite Sultana, he stepped into a neighbouring coffee-house to pass an hour first, as she was gone to the play. In the next box to him sat a party of officers; his back was turned towards them, and he amused himself with the news-papers, from which he was roused by a conversation that ensued. One of the gentlemen mentioned,

mentioned, having been the night before at Mr. Nugent's, where he was much entertained with the musical abilities of a Mrs. Herbert, niece to Lady Horton, near Bath, adding, that she was an elegant and accomplished woman.

Captain Obrien (who was just returned to England) was one of the party, laughing, said, he once had the pleasure of her company at ——'s Bagnio, under the Piazza, Covent-Garden.

You must certainly mistake the Lady, Sir, replied the gentleman; the Mrs. Herbert I speak of is a relation of Mr. Nugent's, a woman of strict virtue, and I am certain, from the dignity of sentiment she displayed, never could deviate from the path of rectitude.

She might esteem it the path of rectitude, said he, sneering, to bless me with her company, which I give you my honor she did.

Then, Sir, answered the gentleman, I was never more deceived in any female's exterior appearance of virtue—yet, as you pledge your *honor*, I submit.

It is no wonder Mr. Herbert was astonished and hurt at this intelligence; any other man would have insisted upon a farther explanation; but he had such a despicable opinion of the sex in general, from having always associated with the most infamous, that he easily credited the assertion, and flew to Mrs. Delvillla (who he found just returned from the play) in great perturbation of mind at being duped (as he called it) by a wanton. It was her interest to heighten his passion, and endeavour to fix the crimination on Mrs. Herbert, which she did, by saying she had heard of it before. He stayed with her till four in the morning. This intelligence I received afterwards from a housemaid of ours, who had a brother, servant to Mrs. Delvillla at that period. Laura had passed a sleepless night, expecting

expecting him every moment. When he came home, he traversed the chamber with hasty steps. She asked if he was unwell. He answered her with bitter imprecations, and said, she might go again, and remain for ever with Obrien under the Piazza. He was convinced of her guilt, and Obrien had blazed it in a public coffee-house; then related what had passed.

For a moment, the shock of having her character thus publicly traduced by a villain, rendered her silent: Then, bursting into tears, she assured Mr. Herbert of her innocence, but in vain. He was regardless of her asseverations, at the same time saying, he should not call Captain Obrien to account for what had passed previous to his knowledge of her: However, in future, she must behave better, or expect to be discarded with infamy. Out of respect to her family then he would live with her, hateful as she became to him.



Your hatred I cannot bear, returned my beloved friend, almost distracted; only favour me so far as to write to Lord Seymour, who was scarce a minute from me at the period Captain Obrien says I was criminal with him.

Say no more, interrupted Mr. Herbert, you will only bring proofs against yourself. Nothing you or Lord Seymour can advance will alter my opinion.—His servant then entered, to inform him a bed was prepared in another room, and he departed, leaving her in extreme agony of mind. She had not slept all night—affliction then chased away repose intirely, and, with the assistance of Lucy, who endeavoured to comfort her, she arose.

Mrs. Herbert knew it would be of no avail to inform her aunt of this melancholy event, as her Ladyship was quite absorbed in methodism, and if she did interfere would be violent, and only farther irritate Mr. Herbert: She therefore immediately



mediately wrote to Lady Seymour—related all the particulars she knew, and earnestly requested her advice; and that Lord Seymour would favour her so far as to clear up the circumstance of her meeting Capt. Obrian to Mr. Herbert.

Distress of mind (for in such a case I think a rigid stoic must feel) brought on a nervous fever, which confined her to her chamber during a week, in which time Mr. Herbert never came near her. When she was ab' to dine in the parlour, he sometimes sat at table; but continued sulky and silent, though she often endeavoured to introduce a conversation, in hopes of making him sensible of her innocence.

You may guess the infamous Mrs. Devilla used every effort to keep up Mr. Herbert's resentment against his unhappy wife.—Women of that stamp find a pleasure in criminating the virtuous.—She contrived to put a girl of her acquaintance

in Obrian's way, and incite him to persevere in calumniating Mrs. Herbert's character, which he did in every company, as it suited his malevolent disposition and spirit of revenge, for her having treated him with contempt.

At length it came to Mr. and Mrs. Nugent's ears, before Mrs. Herbert heard from Lady Seymour.

Though that Gentleman and Lady were nearly related to my friend, and had a sincere regard for her, she had concealed it from them, thinking they were of too volatile a turn of mind to be of any service to her in so serious a matter, and that Lord Seymour alone could have influence over Mr. Herbert.

Mr. and Mrs. Nugent was much astonished and grieved at the news, concerning my beloved Laura, who they had not seen for some time, and Mrs. Nugent immediately went to visit her, concluding her  
innocent.

innocent. She was, notwithstanding her natural gaiety of temper, much shocked to see Mrs. Herbert so very indisposed and altered, with such visible traces of affliction on her countenance. She assured her of her sincere friendship and wish of serving her, hinting, at the same time, she was not ignorant of Obrian's report.

Mrs. Herbert, finding it was no longer a secret, related every circumstance concerning the affair, and her having wrote to Lady Seymour.

Mrs. Nugent, enraged at Obrien, wanted immediately to send Mr. Nugent to make him publicly avow himself guilty of calumny. — Mrs. Herbert requested she would have patience till letters came from Ireland. — It was with difficulty she could persuade her to coincide with her opinion. — At last she did, and sent away her carriage (though she was engaged to a party that was going to the Opera) determining to pass the evening with Laura,  
to

to comfort her under her deep affliction. This for her was a great sacrifice to friendship. The next day my friend received a letter from Lady Seymour, full of affection and consolatory advice. Lord Seymour, as he was not in England himself, judged it proper for Mr. Nugent to undertake undeceiving Mr. Herbert, and had wrote instructions to that Gentleman, who he was well acquainted with; he inclosed a letter for Mr. Herbert.

Mr. Nugent, who sincerely pitied my friend, and wished much to undeceive Mr. Herbert, waited upon him with Lord Seymour's letter; and shewed him likewise that he himself had received from his Lordship. They contained a strong vindication of Laura's character, and blamed Mr. Herbert for crediting the assertions of so despicable a fellow as Obrian, whose ill name was universally known. He intreated him not to let his reason be any longer clouded, as he must be sensible, if he would candidly reflect, that

Obrian

Obrian could not possibly have had a connection of that sort with Laura before her marriage. Lord Seymour was an old friend, who Mr. Herbert much respected, and had received several marks of friendship from. — This letter, therefore, had some sway over him.—He told Mr. Nugent he should be happy to find Mrs. Herbert had been wronged ; but Captain Obrian had asserted what he said in so positive a manner, he really could hardly suppose him such a villain as so strongly to assert a falsehood.

Mr. Nugent answered, he hoped he would be convinced, if Obrian publicly avowed his guilt.

Mr. Herbert said he certainly should.

Will you then favour me with your company tomorrow evening? Mrs. Nugent has a rout, and I have engaged my friend Craven to bring that infamous fellow



low to my house. — He shall be treated less rigorous than he deserves.

Mr. Herbert was loth to comply ; but Mr. Nugent made a point of it, and he at length promised to attend.

The event answered Mr. and Mrs. Nugent's wishes. — Obrian said, he only meant he had *met* Mrs. Herbert under the Piazza ; but people had construed his words their own way ; that subterfuge was not sufficiently satisfactory. — Mr. Craven insisted that his meaning was evidently to criminate the amiable Mrs. Herbert's character, and he should avow his guilt before he quitted the company. Obrien was a great coward, and fearful of being compelled to answer his conduct in a more dangerous way, if he did not comply — he therefore stammered out, “ that Mrs. Herbert's having treated him with disdain before his going abroad, had determined him to be revenged ; that she was perfectly innocent, and he was sorry he

he had been the cause of unhappiness to her." The company, who were gathered round him, were full of indignation, and several Gentlemen wanted to kick him out of company, but Mr. Nugent interposed. He said he should depart safe from his house; if they met him elsewhere, they might act as they pleased; yet, before he departed, he must insist upon his signing an avowal of his guilt, to be published in the Evening Star, since he had publicly, in various places, traduced her character; such a public declaration of his infamy was necessary. This he readily complied with, and was suffered to retire unmolested.

You find, my dear Miss Albert, Mr. Herbert's conduct in this affair was not what it should have been, and many despised him for it. Mr. Nugent, with true friendship, immediately attended him to Brook-Street, to relieve my dear Laura's anxiety. Mr. Herbert was too stubborn to own himself in the wrong; but a reconciliation

conciliation ensued, and the next evening, though my friend was much indisposed, Mr. and Mrs. Nugent insisted on her accompanying them with Mr. Herbert to the Opera, for to convince the world Obrian's report was malevolent and false, as inserted in the morning news-papers. Obrian, where known, was treated with contempt, which forced him to quit London.

My worthy and amiable friend was some time recovering her health and spirits, notwithstanding Mr. and Mrs. Nugent's united endeavours to amuse her with various engagements. Mr. Herbert, though reconciled, was unkind. — She knew he visited Mrs. Delvillia, and that she had but a second place in his affection. When she married him, she had vainly flattered herself with possessing his whole esteem, as at his age she thought gallantry was at end. — She was disappointed. — Instead of folding to her bosom a sincere friend and companion, to whom she could confide  
all

all her thoughts and cares — she found a cold, indifferent acquaintance, whom she scarce saw but at dinner, and who thought it an honour to admit her to his bed. Her sensibility was wounded, and from thence arose that languor and dejection, which, in spite of all her efforts to the contrary, at times takes possession of her.

About three months afterwards, my Mother and self returned to England. — The first morning after our arrival, being with Laura, Mrs. Nugent called. — When she was gone, my Mother remarked how much she resembled Mr. Herbert's <sup>1<sup>st</sup></sup> wife. First wife! exclaimed my friend; I knew not Mr. Herbert ever had one before me! — My Mother was extremely sorry she had inadvertently informed her, not supposing but that she must have known it, and wondered it had not transpired from Mrs. Spearman or him; but, to satisfy Laura, told her Mr. Herbert had been married to an amiable young Lady, without fortune, who died in child-bed of the  
first.

first child, who, she supposed, was likewise dead, as she never heard of it afterwards. We knew that Mr. Herbert had used that unfortunate Lady very ill; but concealed that intelligence from our friend, who seemed hurt at his concealing so particular a circumstance from her. We returned to our residence at Windsor, from whence we often exchanged visits with Mrs. Herbert. She strove to render her mind easy by employing her time in rational amusement, rather than in the tontine of fashionable diversions. — She sometimes mixed with the world — but retired disgusted at his follies, and regretting the want of a domestic companion and friend.

Lady Horton died about that period, and left her five thousand pounds. — Five thousand more she bequeathed to charitable uses. Mr. Herbert treated my friend with ill-nature, and at times with fits of jealousy, which much affected her spirits. It is impossible for her to describe what she has suffered from him! — When you,  
my



my dear Miss Albert, have been longer in the family, you will have a clearer conception of her unfortunate situation, and his unworthiness !

Three years since Lord Seymour had a large estate left him in Devonshire, and a beautiful seat, called "The Charming Rock," where he determined to reside in future. His two daughters were married in Ireland, and my cousin Charles, between sixteen and seventeen, with his tutors, accompanied his parents to England. They visited London, and stayed here a fortnight. — Charles had not forgot "his dear little love ;" but treated her with respect and friendship, as well as his parents. Lord Seymour took every opportunity of pointing out Laura's amiable qualities to Mr. Herbert, who, during their stay, treated her with more kindness.

My dear Mother, being extremely ill, soon after the departure of the Seymours, was ordered to Bath, where we hired a  
house,

house, and resided till her death. Louisa Godfrey (who you have often heard me speak of) was a near relation of mine, about my own age, and of a very amiable disposition.—At that period she was at a convent at Avignon (being a Catholic) and under great affliction. — Her Father was governor of —, in the West-Indies. She there exchanged affection with a young Gentleman of good family and fortune, and the match was agreed on, when her Father, whose health had been prejudiced by the climate, was obliged to return to his native country, in hopes to regain it. Here he soon expired. Her lover, two months after, sailed for England, to be united to her.—Fate denied his wishes, and the ship was wrecked, and only one boy on board saved.

Thus was Louisa doubly wounded, and, spite of our intreaties, fled to the convent of De Avignon. When my Mother found herself near her end (unknown to me) she wrote to request her presence to console me.—

me.—Louisa, who is possessed of a feeling heart, complied, and soon after arrived in England. My joy was great to see her; but it was soon damped by the death of the best of parents and friends. Louisa soothed my sorrow, and consented to reside with me in future. I took Villa Burton, which had been occupied by Lady Horton, Mrs. Spearman being dead. — There we now live happy together. Our friend's short history ends here.—Let it warn you, dear Miss Albert, against being precipitate in your choice. — Had she taken time to inquire into Mr. Herbert's character—she never would have been his wife, and escaped misery for life.

What a wretch is this guardian of mine! exclaimed I, and how unworthy the possession of so amiable a woman! Were I his wife I would, in the first place, retaliate, by withdrawing my affection from him; and, in the second, never be found at home but when I had company.—The pleasures this sweet town affords would  
very

very well compensate me for the loss of such a creature's affection.

Ah! returned she, smiling, believe me you will think differently when you are married.—Much as you love diversions at present, you would find them a poor shadowy exchange for the loss of a husband's affection.—May you never experience the severe trial.

The sentimental and prudent Miss Montague is much mistaken in my sentiments. I esteem Mrs. Herbert much as a worthy character — but her primitive ideas I do not admire, my dear Alménia; and, thank my stars, I was not born with such keen sensibility. Were I espoused to such a man as Herbert, I would engage every coxcomb in my train to torment him.—Jealousy might awaken tenderness, and make him desert his mistress and other women; at least I would amuse myself without parting with that honour I hold sacred.

We

We are all preparing for a visit to "The Charming Rock." Herbert tells me it was my Father's last request, he should introduce me to his dearest friend soon after my arrival in England.

I by chance overheard a conversation between Mrs. Herbert and Miss Montague—by which I found that my Father and Lord Seymour, before the death of the former, agreed, if Charles and I could approve each other, we should be united; but wisely resolved to conceal their intentions from us, lest we should, through natural opposition and perverseness, run counter to their wishes. I certainly shall at present, having no inclination to be fettered, as I have free liberty to pursue pleasure with Mrs. Nugent, which is the summit of my wishes. — I have admirers in plenty—To be followed and adored is enchanting; so master Charles you may seek elsewhere for a wife. You shall hear from me soon again. London is very



50 ILL EFFECTS OF  
empty at this period, or I should leave it  
with regret.

Yours, &c.

H. ALBERT.

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FROM THE SAME,  
T O  
THE SAME.

*The Charming Rock.*

HOW can you expect me to be regular in my correspondence from so stupid a place. — I wrote you an account of the Park — woods — water-falls, &c. Dull scenes of that sort are so much alike, they will not bear hardly a first description, much less a repetition. — My spirits were quite exhausted when I last wrote, with the groupe of gloomy ideas! — Such places are hateful to me. You request a particular description of Charles Seymour: I don't like him, Almeria: — He is too inanimate, and has not made one gallant speech to me since my arrival. — He treats  
me

me with an affability and politeness natural to him — but so he would an old dowager. The old folks take abundant pains to force an affection between us, which we are equally averse to entertain. — I have caught him frequently in the grove with his arms folded, and sighing bitterly like a despairing lover, from whence I conclude he harbours a secret passion. Every one agrees that he is handsome and amiable. He is a tall, elegant figure, with a candid, open countenance; bloom sufficient, and I fancy expressive eyes, if he chose to make use of them to the nymph of his choice; is dutiful to his parents, and fearful of offending, being rather of a timid disposition, for which I despise him; yet it is visible he is determined never to address me, which I admire him for, as it shews some resolution and spirit. He is gentle, humane, and benevolent, and makes ludicrous, entertaining remarks on the company we receive, which amuses us at Voila, Monsieur Charles Seymour. His tutor, who is in orders, has very little

of the clerical character about him; — seems well disposed to be gallant, and, if I am not mistaken, has an intrigue with Lady Seymour's woman. Perhaps his pupil's taste may be similar, but none of his intrigues have as yet transpired. I must own Almeria, Seymour's indifference has piqued my vanity. — It would give me pleasure to make a conquest of him, tho' I am resolved never to marry him, especially as I fancy he would be rather a Quixote in love. I like to torment the male creatures; yet I have no hope of subduing him, as I think his heart is disposed of—to whom I wish to know.

Miss Montague sat off for Bath yesterday, her cousin Louisa being ill. — I should have been sorry for her departure, had she not tormented me so in favour of Charles. Mrs. Herbert is much dispirited at the loss of her company, and Mr. Herbert's ill-nature; and Lord Seymour has been confined to his room some days with a severe cold.

This

This morning, as Mrs. Herbert and I were sitting at work together in the breakfast parlour, my guardian joined us. She inquired how his Lordship was, as she thought he was just come from him. — “How should he know, he had not seen him? Are you not going to visit him then?” said she, sick people are apt to think their friends neglect them, when common ceremonies are omitted.—Mercy on me! Had you seen him, Almeria, you would have thought the wretch mad! — He stamped—raved—swore he would not be controuled, &c.

I meant not to controul you, Mr. Herbert, said she, mildly, while the tears rolled down her cheeks—I only took the liberty of reminding you. So saying, she rose, and retired to her chamber to weep.

When his passion was a little subsided, I ventured to ask him if all husbands were so despotic, as a candid answer would preserve me, perhaps, from misery — for

misery it must be, said I, to be debarred the gift of speech.

You are impertinent, Miss Albert, said he, and take greater liberties than becomes you; he then turned from me with contempt.

In going to his wife's chamber, I met Charles Seymour. "Miss Albert!" said he, with so grave a countenance.—Gravity becomes me, said I; at this instant I detest your whole sex. Herbert is a tyrant, who renders his amiable wife wretched: I am going to console her.—*You* have been often witness to his unworthy treatment of her. I have, said he, turning pale.—I will send my Mother to comfort her; she is deserving a better fate, sighing.

His voice faltered as he spoke—compassion affected his whole frame, and he turned to Lady Seymour's apartment. *Compassion* do I call it?—It is rather extraordinary



traordinary he should be *so much* affected at her sorrow! — The more I think of it, Almeria, the more it surprises me. — Surely *she* cannot be the object of his secret and tender wishes. — She is near seven years older than him, and was married before he was old enough to feel a passion for her: If it is so, his love is romantic indeed; for she is strictly virtuous, and her lover void of hope. I wonder this idea never struck me before. I shall now take pains to investigate his future behaviour, and hers likewise. Lady Seymour soon joined me in Mrs. Herbert's room, and proposed an airing, which we agreed to; Charles did not attend us. Surely it is only a friendly compassion he feels for her, as he seems no way desirous of embracing opportunities of enjoying her company. — I am bewildered in reflection.

My conjecture was well founded, Almeria. — This morning Lucy cut Mrs. Herbert's hair before she dressed it, while

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I sat

I sat and read to her. The business of her toilet compleated, we went to Lady Seymour's dressing-room. I had left my work in Mrs. Herbert's room, and came to fetch it, when, at a distance, I saw Charles Seymour enter that apartment. Amazed! I softly followed him to the door, and through a crevice saw him take up a lock of Laura's hair, and put it to his lips—prest it to his breast, and say softly to himself, "This shall be my constant companion—this will I wear near my heart." He then turned to go out of the room, and I hurried into the next, which is mine.

How mortifying, that a woman, inferior to me in youth and beauty, should thus rob me of so desirable a conquest!—Was it any other woman I should meditate revenge; but Mrs. Herbert is possessed of my firm esteem, and quite innocent of the intention of stealing his heart from me, or sensible of being in possession of it—

it—otherwise she would not take the infinite pains she does to point out his merits, and persuade me to think of him as a future husband. I wish to captivate him, because I think he would be a *constant* admirer.—He is agreeable—but I would never marry him were he so inclined. — I should not chuse a husband who would domesticate me, and I'm sure that would be his wish. A title, with a being gay as myself, shall only rob me of my *liberty*.

Delightful intelligence! The young, elegant, and spirited Lord Conway is expected here this evening with a foreign nobleman, his friend; they are making the tour of England. His Lordship is a relation of Lady Seymour. Lord Seymour and Mr. Herbert seem displeased at their coming, fearful, I suppose, least one of them should engage my heart instead of Seymour.—I have not time for more, as I must attend the toilet to heighten my natural charms.

Every

Every moment, but those allotted for rest, has been occupied by amusements for this fortnight past, and I have not had time to write to thee, my Almeria. The Gentlemen are gone out to-day on a party of pleasure without us; I therefore embrace the opportunity to inform you Lord Conway is quite to my taste—seems perfectly my slave, and when he offers me his hand, I shall certainly accept it.

To our great surprise the foreign Nobleman proved to be Count Melfleur, who we were acquainted with at Paris; and, as I before mentioned, an admirer of Mrs. Herbert, I make no doubt but he visited England on her account, and purposely followed her hither. He is an adept in the art of pleasing, and accommodates himself in the Chesterfield stile to people's various humours, so that he is become a great favourite with Mr. Herbert, whose Lady seems to dislike him, and receives his compliments (which are never offered in her husband's presence) with a distance bordering

bordering on incivility, which I never saw her treat any person with before. Charles Seymour is uniformly guarded in his behaviour to Mrs. Herbert; and had I not been witness to his theft of the lock of hair, I should now have concluded my suspicion void of foundation. That discovery makes me deeply scrutinize his conduct, and though his sentiments are not suspected by any of the company, I can observe numerous symptoms of his passion for her, which is heightened by her innocent friendship for him. He observed her aversion to the Count with pleasure, yet is visibly (to me) chagrined at Melfleur's attention to Mrs. Herbert in my guardian's absence, and seems to put a great constraint on himself, in appearing polite and friendly to his rival, while he treats Lord Conway with real cordial friendship.

Never, never, my Almeria, did I receive so severe a shock as to-day. — My hopes of Conway are blasted. — His Lord-

D 6

ship



ship is a married man. The liveliness of my disposition will, I hope, soon enable me to recover my usual tranquillity, and I am determined to conquer this foolish penchant. Was it not strange that we were not before informed he was fettered? But, I suppose, Lord and Lady Seymour thought it of no consequence, and vainly hoped I favoured their son. I will now relate the horrid discovery methodically.

On the summit of a lofty rock, which hangs over the marge of the ocean, is placed a pavillion during the summer months. — The paths to it are winding through different thickets and labyrinths, in which are beautiful cascades and flowery harbours. It was agreed yesterday we should dine there, accompanied by some of the neighbouring gentry, and as it is but two miles from the house, we had a pleasant walk to it.

Each Gentleman offered a Lady his arm.—Mr. Herbert attended Mrs. Howard,  
ard,

ard, a gay widow of forty.—Lord Conway offered me his arm, and Count Melfleur proposed escorting Mrs. Herbert, when she, looking round, observed Charles Seymour.—Excuse me, my Lord, said she ; you don't perceive the lovely Miss Bowers is unattended : Mr. Seymour is an old friend, I will trouble him, since no other Lady is left unengaged.

Mrs. Herbert's conversation is always instructive, returned he, which makes me covet it ; but since it is her *pleasure*, I will offer my service to Miss Bowers ; he bowed—was accepted by that young Lady, and walked on. No doubt Charles Seymour was pleased with her mark of friendship, and the disappointment of the Count. Conway entertained me with his passion, and I arrived at the pavillion in high spirits.

During dinner French horns, and other instruments, formed a concert, which echoed from the neighbouring rocks.—

Some

Some songs were sung by some of the Ladies.—Mrs. Herbert's voice was by much the most powerful and melodious. I want you much to hear her; the words she warbles are always distinct and expressive, and, when pathetic, accords the soul to woe. Remember I am modest, and mention not my own execution.

Before tea it was agreed we should walk in parties for an hour.—Conway attended me as before: Lord and Lady Seymour, with Mrs. Herbert and Charles, wandered forth together, till growing tired, it seems she requested they would let her rest herself in an arbour, and call for her in their return to the pavillion, she having a book in her pocket to amuse herself with.

In the mean time Lord Conway, when alone with me, renewed the subject of his passion, and, finding me listen to him, I fear with too much attention, lamented his fate in being united to an infamous wife, whom *he* had not been able to get divorced

divorced from, adding, I was the only female that had ever truly subdued his heart ! This abrupt intelligence shocked me much, and almost unguarded my real sentiments—when, suddenly recollecting myself, I assumed a lively manner :— Oh ! Heavens, said I, no more gallantry, I beseech you, from the husband of another ; it is insupportably disagreeable, as well as guilty : — So saying, I fled from him, and being better acquainted with the labyrinths than himself, soon lost sight of him, and found Mrs. Herbert reading in an arbour.

The disappointment I had just undergone, and exertion of spirits I had forced, quite exhausted me ; I leaned on her shoulder, and burst into tears.

My dear Harriot, said she, alarmed, something extraordinary must have happened to cause *your* tears—tell me, that I may relieve your sorrow.

I weep

I weep at my own folly, said I.—I love Lord Conway, and he has just informed ~~me~~ he is already married, upon which I left him to conceal my shame in your friendly bosom.

Amiable girl! said she, how I pity you.—We cannot leave this place immediately, as Mr. Herbert has promised to stay three months longer.—I hope these Noblemen, however, will soon depart, and sincerely do I wish you could transfer your affections to Charles Seymour; he is worthy your tenderness, my Harriot, and would make you happy.

I continued weeping immoderately, and remained silent. — This is not a time I know, said she, ~~my~~ dear girl, to press you on the subject, and it was very ill judged of my friends not to introduce him as a married man, which would have prevented the pangs you now suffer.—Your own prudence, my love, points out you should avoid him in future, and preserve,  
at



at least in appearance, your usual vivacity, that he may not suspect your real sentiments, or farther insult you with a disclosure of his.

We heard somebody approaching at that period; uneasy, lest the traces of my tears should be observed, I begged she would permit me to depart.—She hurried a lavender-bottle into my hand, and bid me seek a cascade, that I might mix some of it with water on my handkerchief, to wash away from my face the symptoms of sorrow.—I dared not follow her advice, for rouge was on my cheeks, therefore I could not trust them, lest it should lead to a discovery of the art I used.

Tender, affectionate creature! I shall ever love her for her kindness. I retired behind the arbour, for I had not power to go farther, and through the opening of the leaves saw Charles Seymour enter, and inform her Lord and Lady Seymour  
had

had taken a shorter cut to the pavillion, and left him to conduct her there, when she had sufficiently rested herself.

I will attend you presently, my good friend, said she ; in the mean time permit me to speak to you on the subject of matrimony. The obligation I am under to Lord and Lady Seymour, and my wishes for your happiness, as well as their satisfaction, emboldens me to take this liberty.—Miss Albert is a most amiable and beautiful young Lady ; what objection can you possibly have to such an union, which your parents and friends think so eligible ?

He looked extremely confused and hurt.—Believe me, Madam, returned he, (taking her hand in a friendly manner, while his voice faltered, and his eyes viewed her with a tenderness she did not observe, as she was examining some flowers he had brought her in the other hand) believe, me, my dear Madam, my esteem  
and

and friendship for you is so great, there is no request you could make me on any other subject, that I would not with pleasure oblige you in.—At present I have a dislike to matrimony, and very probable I shall never marry (sighing.) Miss Albert I allow is beautiful and amiable, but our dispositions are so dissimilar, we should render each other unhappy.—She loves public amusements and gaiety. Was I to marry I should prefer a select society and domestic happiness; to possess it the Lady I marry must have a congenial mind. These are my real sentiments; it pains me they differ from my parents and my best friends—yet surely, my dear Mrs. Herbert, you will allow I have some plea for my firm resolution, as it is of serious consequence to my peace through life.

Time, perhaps, may alter your sentiments, said she, of Miss Albert. — At present you must consider she is young, and just released from the confinement of a convent, which naturally incites her to  
enjoy

enjoy the amusements of life. — She is like a bird just escaped from its cage; it flutters with joy at its liberty—ranges over the fields and groves, and pecks at every fruit it passes; but accustomed to confinement it soon grows weary.—Birds of prey appear; it trembles at its danger, and wishes for some safe cage and kind protector. Miss Albert, who is very sensible, will soon, I make no doubt, grow weary of frivolous diversions—and when a wife, I think, study to render her husband happy.

You are an excellent pleader, returned Charles, smiling; but I have some reason to think Miss Albert would refuse my addresses: However, I shall never put her to the trial.

There is no resisting destiny I see, said she, with a smile; according to the old adage, marriages are fixed by fate, and the fair one, who is to subdue your heart, has not yet appeared; when she does,  
you

you will not so critically weigh her mental endowments, or congenial mind, (laughing.) Excuse me, you talk like one who has never felt the power of love; when you do, the Lady you marry, perhaps, may possess gayer sentiments than Miss Albert: I shall then laugh at your wise caution, and remind you of this conversation; but never, I hope, have cause to pity you for a wrong choice. So saying, she rose to depart, and what answer he made, I know not.

My amiable friend has not the most distant idea of Charles Seymour's tenderness for her, and regards him as a brother, and wishes to see him happily settled for life. There was much truth in his opinion of our being wretched, if united; for I should detest any man who would confine me to what he calls domestic felicity.—Heaven send I may not meet with so dismal a fate, as to be debarred in winter from the diversions the metropolis affords. I fear not birds of prey  
among



among mankind, and have sufficient prudence, I'm certain, to guard myself against them. There is a young Esquire in this neighbourhood who is very troublesome to me with his odious offers of love :—His breath is almost as noisome to me as the poet's lake of Averno, and I always dread his coming near me.—His presumption is great, to imagine I would become the wife of a country booby.—My contempt and disdain, however, have not power to intimidate him. But to return from this digression : After sufficiently bathing my eyes, and hoping they retained no traces of the briny fluid which had passed them, I joined the company.—In the evening we arranged ourselves to return to the house : I could not join Mrs. Herbert, least Conway should think I had made her a confidante, and was determined not to trust myself with him alone.—Miss Bowers is almost an idiot, though beautiful ; I therefore was sensible she must be a very unpleasant companion to Count Melfleur : So just before we set out entered into a  
simple

simple conversation with her, saying I detested *teté-a-tetés*, and insisted upon walking with her and the Count. He joyfully accepted the company of his friend and myself, as he was weary of his companion; but Conway was visibly chagrined at my conduct. The wretch, I suppose, thought I should not act with so much resolution, and is doubtful of my sentiments concerning him: — So let him remain, yet from you I cannot conceal the disappointment of my wishes — title, fortune, and gaiety. — I don't think I shall sleep to-night, but to-morrow I shall, I hope, be at ease.

I am heartily provoked at my folly, in making Mrs. Herbert a confidante of my secret sentiments for Conway. — Though she will not disclose my secret, she will too frequently be offering her advice in regard to my conduct. — Her accidentally falling in my way was very unlucky, as at that period I was in such agony, I could not help giving vent to the sorrow of the moment; yet I see no reason why  
I should

I should command Conway to leave me. He may in time gain a divorce ; we may then marry, and make a happy, fashionable couple. He has apologized for the effusion of his passion, and treats me with respect :—I admire him for it. — I love him, and hope he will still be mine. It mortifies me to think I can make no impression on Charles Seymour, for I should like him much as a dangler —.

*“ My pride is to hold all mankind in my chain,  
The conquest I prize, tho’ the slave I disdain.”*

I will now close my epistle, as it is a long one, and you will be impatient at not hearing from me. Adieu.

Yours, sincerely,

H. ALBERT.

MRS.

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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

*The Charming Rock.*

IT is with pleasure I inform you of the departure of Lord Conway and Count Melfleur. The absence of the former, I fear, was very necessary for the repose of Harriot; that of the latter relieves me from a disagreeable restraint in my behaviour, which I was compelled to put in practice to check his audacity. At my first introduction into the world, after my marriage, I flattered myself, dear Selina, the plainness of my person, and protection of Mr. Herbert, would have secured me from insult; but experience has convinced me neither was sufficient to prevent the insolence of libertines,

VOL. I.

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whose

whose chief joy is in a variety of victims. To complain to Mr. Herbert would be dangerous, as serious consequences might ensue :—I have therefore only to murmur in secret, and avoid those wretches who dare to think meanly of me. Count Melfleur, in spite of all my precaution, found an opportunity to speak to me alone. He did not, indeed, insult me with the name of *love* ; he avoided that insolent word, yet he spoke of *friendship* in such very warm terms, and lamented our approaching separation, pressing my hand with such ardour to his lips, that I was compelled to resent it, and assured him, if he repeated such behaviour, I should acquaint Mr. Herbert of it. The morning he departed, after breakfast, I returned to my chamber, and in my work bag found a letter from him, which, I suppose, he had secretly conveyed there just before his departure. It assured me of his great respect for me, and unbounded friendship ; and though his passion was hopeless for my sake, he was determined to lead a life of celibacy.

This



This epistle I immediately tore in pieces, and was extremely mortified at being treated with so much freedom. Insolent wretch! to mention *respect*, at the very period he was insulting me! I am weary of the world, my dear Selina, and wish I could retire with thee and Louisa to some pleasing solitude, where I might pass my days in peace and innocence.

*Contented live, and smile at life's decay,  
Which, like a pleasing dream, would glide away.*

Lord Seymour and his son have, I fear, had a disagreeable altercation concerning Miss Albert, whom Charles has absolutely refused to address. Lady Seymour appears reconciled to his refusal, being rather displeased with Harriot's conduct in regard to Lord Conway. It is with reluctance I own, even to thee, my dearest friend, her giddiness of behaviour is reprehensible. pressed her to my bosom.—I pitied, I loved her for her first declaration of her unhappy regard for Lord Conway; it proved the

E 2                      innocence

innocence of her heart, and unwillingness to suffer the least shadow of guilt ; but her usual sprightliness soon returned, and she treated him with apparent marks of preference to any other Gentleman.—I then thought it proper to expostulate with her, and warn her of danger. — She laughed it off, and said her heart was returned safe, yet she had no objection to retaining a slave. I told her it would endanger her reputation, and mar her future settlement in life. My dear Mrs. Herbert, returned she, you may trust me; my behaviour is to convince him I am not *his* slave, though he is *mine* : Were I to sigh and look disdainful, he would be vain indeed !

Her partiality to him gives me great uneasiness, lest her reputation should be tarnished before she gets a husband ; I have pointed it out to her in a clear, strong light. — At times she has thanked me, and promised in future to avoid him. An unfortunate propensity to coquetry (if she  
does

does not endeavour to conquer it) will in time, I fear, sully her fair character. — While she is under our protection, I shall think it my duty to watch over her, and whether acceptable or not, further her with my advice, which, I hope, she will continue to receive with good nature.

In three weeks we are to leave this place, as winter is approaching fast. — Mr. Seymour and tutor accompany us to town, and from thence go to Oxford, where Charles is to remain some time, and then set out on his travels. He is a young man of an amiable disposition, and, I hope, will soon meet with a Lady of birth and fortune suitable to his inclination, as, in my opinion, early marriages for his sex is a preservative against entering into a libertine course of life, which too often degrades and imbitters their future days, as well as shorten them. We frequently observe, my dear Selina, that young men of fashion return coxcombs from their travels, with their morals corrupted instead

of improved, especially if they are not accompanied by a tutor of firm resolution, to guide, and strict morality in his own conduct; that Mr. Danvers is an improper one to attend Mr. Seymour abroad, we are well convinced, from the intelligence we had from Lucy of his low intrigues. What he practises himself, he will certainly overlook, or encourage in his pupil, who at present, I believe, has no inclination to it. — Perhaps I *may* be mistaken, but I hope he is pure as I wish him.

I was interrupted by Mr. Herbert, who just before received a letter from the abbess of St. Clare, informing him Miss Fanny Albert died of the small-pox the 7th instant! “Born but to bloom and die.—Cut off in innocence, perhaps from evils to come.”

——“*Al! what is human life?  
How like the dial's tardy moving shade;  
Day after day slides from us unperceiv'd.*

*The*

*The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth :  
Too subtile is the movement to be seen ;  
Yet soon the hour is up—and we are gone !”*

Harriot is much affected at the intelligence of her sister's death ; but you well know is not of a disposition to indulge sorrow long.—It is a happiness she is not.—She will glide through life much easier than those possessed of keen sensibility ; yet sensibility—sweet sensibility ! I adore thee, universal philanthropy, and heavenly charity with thee do dwell.

Adieu, my dear Selina. — Remember me kindly to Louisa, and let me find a letter from you on my arrival in London.

Yours, affectionately,

LAURA HERBERT.



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LAURA HERBERT.

30 ILL EFFECTS OF

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MISS ALBERT,

TO

LADY ALMERIA.

*Brook-Street.*

I HAVE shed the tear of regret for poor Fanny.—It was hard to be cut off thus early in life — yet, as Mrs. Herbert says, she was untainted with the vices of the world, and is happy. I will not, therefore, injure her so much as to wish her back in this wicked globe, which at present satisfies me.

Poor Fanny's fortune, added to my own, makes me an heiress of some consequence. I have a variety of suitors—some for my fortune, and some for my person, while Conway is in dreadful terror, lest I should jilt him and marry. To you I will candidly confess, my dear Almeria, I am not  
at

at present disposed to matrimony, and perfectly satisfied with the homage I receive, having not yet seen any man I like so well as Lord Conway. Frequent lessons of prudence and rebuke do I receive from Mrs. Herbert, for my conduct to his Lordship—which I listen to, thank her for, and secretly laugh at and forget. It would be very hard, indeed, if, with my fortune and accomplishments, I did not enjoy life according to my own fancy.—To have a number of captives constitutes my chief felicity, and whether Conway will ever be at liberty to offer me his hand or not, I must retain him in my chain. This the wise and prudent Mrs. Herbert makes almost a criminal matter of. — She has strange primitive notions, though she is a worthy creature. — If she had my spirit she would be happier. Count Melfleur is

*" True as the dial to the sun,  
Although it be not shone upon,"*

and pursues her like a shadow, having free access here, as he is a great favourite of Mr. Herbert's. Her purity of sentiment incites her frequently to feign illness, purposely to avoid him; and sometimes she has severe lectures from her husband, for behaving with slight and disrespect to his friend. Silence in such a case is truly ridiculous.—I should complain loudly was I as averse to flattery as she is.—I tell her so.—She sighs, shakes her head, and answers, ah! my dear Harriot, the discovery might produce fatal consequences. Mr. Herbert is prone to jealousy. The Count with art conceals his latent passion from him, and was I to complain, Melfleur might, out of revenge, criminate me as Obrian did; then your guardian would not listen to my asseverations of innocence—if otherwise, a duel would ensue. She must be miserable her own way, Almeria —.

I was interrupted by Mrs. Nugent, who was going to purchase some silk,  
and



and requested my company and Mrs. Herbert's.—The latter said she had a rich friend near the mercer's, and with Mrs. Nugent's permission would leave her to make her choice, and return to us in a short time. This was agreed on.—She sat us down, and we walked to the further end of Mr. Persian's shop, which was a small warm room, where we amused ourselves with the sight of silks of the newest fashion. Mrs. Nugent made the necessary purchase, and Mr. Persian retired. While we were waiting for Mrs. Herbert's return, we heard two Gentlemen talking in a small room adjoining—when drawing the corner of the curtain, which covered a small pane of glass, we observed my lover, Colonel Hartoys and his friend Martin; the former was buying a dress for his adorable Victoria, who he had kept three years, and doats on. Mr. Persian left the place to get change for a note, and the following curious conversation ensued :

E 6

I suppose,

I suppose, said Martin, you will soon conclude your affair with Miss Albert ; is the happy day named ?

No, returned the Colonel, it is not ; and were it not for the state of my finances, never should. — She is one of Guido's gigantic beauties, if she is a beauty, and formed on the Broughtonian system. — I detest large figures—then her eyes are always wildly looking for conquests —She is vanity personified. If she means to make conquests, she should never move in the same circle with her guardian's wife, the truly desirable and elegant Mrs. Herbert, who, though not a beauty, has a languishing manner and sweetness of address, that captivates the soul ; at the same time her nobleness of mind corrects licentious address. Her likeness to Victoria made me first notice her, and I own, Martin, I have been compelled to drive away something like a passion for her, yet I can never love any woman sincerely but Victoria. To bring her affluence and happiness,

happinefs, I intend to facrifice my liberty ; a fortnight's poffeffion of Mifs Albert will fatisfy me beyond endurance :—I then fhall fly to my Victoria for life with my wife's fortune, while ſhe undoubtedly will conſole herſelf with Conway, which I ſhall overlook. Her friend Mrs. Nugent too is one of thoſe grofs figures who excite diſguſt. She labours to make conqueſts, laughs and talks loud to engage attention, and is a fit companion for my future ſpouſe.—I think, Martin, in leſs than a month I ſhall be able to fire the ſhuttle-cock Miſs Albert : Here the converſation ended. — Perſian returned with change, and they departed.

You may gueſs how my paſſion roſe at this odious diſcourſe. — Mrs. Nugent was calm till her grofs figure was attacked ; then ſhe became enraged, and, when they departed, proteſted ſhe would be revenged on him. I aſſured her I would join her in any ſcheme ſhe propoſed, for I had more reaſon to be enraged with him ; at  
the

the same time I cautioned her to conceal our intention from Mrs. Herbert, and likewise the conversation that had passed.

Insolent puppy! she exclaimed. Broughtonian system! — How ignorant! Gross figure—Oh! we will be revenged on him. I will indeed laugh and talk loud, but it shall be at his expence. I was delighted to find she was so hurt at his satire, as it would enable me to carry on a plot I instantly formed against him. — He will find “the shuttle-cock” is not to be fired, and that he must retire with Victoria to some solitude from the sneers of the polite world he now associates with. I should console myself with Conway; “what an insulting idea! to think I would become an adulteress! — Does not his insolence call for revenge, Almeria? Even the meek, worthy Mrs. Herbert, I think, could hardly blame me for indulging it. You shall hear more from Guido’s gigantic beauty soon.” — It’s well he allowed

lowed me any sort of beauty. — Vile wretch ! how I hate him.

Mrs. Herbert finding us rather disconcerted, Mrs. Nugent feigned illness, and said she had been seized with a faintness, which was then better, but wished to hurry home. Mrs. Herbert, all tenderness, insisted upon ordering the carriage to her house first, and we parted, promising to sup with her if she was not worse.—We are just going there : I wish I could have some private conversation with Mrs. Nugent, though to-night I cannot expect it. I will, however, dispatch this. — Pity the mortification I have endured, and believe me

Yours, sincerely,

H. ALBERT.

MISS



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MISS ALBERT,

T O

LADY ALMERIA.

*Bath.*

THE farce is commenced, Almeria, and, I think, our plan of operation is so well formed it must succeed. Mrs. Nugent continued feigning indisposition, and proposed an excursion to Bath for the recovery of her health, which she had not really lost. Mr. Nugent, ever ready to oblige her, readily acquiesced with her wish, and obtained Mr. Herbert's consent for me to accompany them. Col. Hartoy, fearful of losing his future spouse, or her being snatched from him in his absence, offered to accompany us, and was permitted to join the party.

I see

I see you all impatience now to know why *Bath* was fixed on for the commencement of our farce.—Read on and learn. A few days previous to the scene at Mr. Persian's, I called to bespeak some things at my milliner's. — She not being at home, one of her women persuaded me to wait a little in the parlour, as she expected her every minute; there I found a very agreeable woman in a genteel, undress, second mourning. She had marks rather of distress of mind on her countenance, and appeared about fifty years of age. We entered into a lively conversation, which discovered she was possessed both of wit and humour, and I was much pleased with her.

Mrs. M — entered, and she retired — upon which I made inquiry concerning her, and found she was a general-officer's daughter, who had married a Gentleman in office; that five and twenty years ago he died, and left her destitute, her Father being dead, when she was compelled to  
go

go abroad with a family as governess to three young Ladies. In a few years two of her pupils and their Mother died ; the surviving young Lady married, and she remained as housekeeper and companion to the old Gentleman till his death, which happened about six months since. In his will he left her an annuity of sixty pounds a year, and five hundred pounds in cash. With this she returned to her native country, and was then at Mrs. M ——'s in an unsettled state, having some thoughts of trying to get into some family as companion. Mrs. M —— farther informed me she was very good-natured, and could adopt herself to any person's humour ; and that abroad she had frequently acted parts in plays with great applause. I promised to think of her, and speak to my friend ; but unluckily had been so much engaged, I had forgot it. Hartoy's insolence reminded me of her. She was a very fit person to play the part I wanted. — I spoke to Mrs. Nugent ; we had a private conversation

conversation with her, and, after enjoining her to secrecy, proposed our plan. She had much pride, and wished to settle herself respectably in life.—If our plan succeeded, we told her (which we had no doubt of) Hartoy must allow her a maintenance as his wife. The bait took.—She has an enterprising genius, and promised to obey our directions. The five hundred we are to secure for her unknown to him, and when she avows her poverty after marriage, she is to plead passion a motive for her conduct, and sacredly conceal our part in the affair.

An old equipage was bought, and new painted in a glaring stile; three footmen and a woman to attend her were hired, *etcetera*, and with great eclat she set out for Bath, whither we was to follow her.

Upon our arrival there, Miss Montague and Louisa received us with joy, and gave us anecdotes of the company—then spoke of Mrs. Orbin, the last Indian Lady,  
of

of immense fortune, that was arrived there. Colonel Hartoy listened with attention ; the account of a Nabobess was worth listening to. — He began to reflect about it I perceived. — We soon got acquainted with her at the pump-room. — She, by our direction, assumed a languishing air, (which is his taste) pretended to doat on romances, and talked much of sentiment, union of hearts, independent of interest, &c. &c. — declared, if ever she married again, it should be done in a frolic ; for marriage was an odious subject to dwell on. This was the clue for him to address her. — He has slackened his devoirs to me, and is very attentive to her. — I appear rather chagrined at it to carry on the farce.

Insolent creature ! How I shall inwardly glory at revenge on him. A few days since she appeared at a ball with a profusion of borrowed diamonds and false stones. I spitefully said to him she looked like a waning moon encircled with stars. — The  
brilliant



brilliant are attractive, said he, smiling, and turning made her a compliment.—I affected displeasure — but the brilliant made him heedless of Guido's gigantic beauty. To-morrow we set out for London. His friend Martin has engaged her an elegant furnished house, and she is to accompany us to town.

We have introduced Mrs. Orbin to Mrs. Herbert, who seems rather pleased with her in Hartoy's absence—but shocked to find her so anxious to please him. I am sorry Mrs. Orbin should so expose herself, said she to me; she is a sensible, amiable woman, if divested of that ridiculous passion for romance. It is natural, returned I, she should wish some favoured being to partake her wealth, and sooth her latter days.

A female friend, my dear Harriot, would more effectually sooth them.—Men marry old women but to scorn them, and enjoy their wealth. Believe me, it is out  
of

of the order of nature for a woman of fifty to inspire a passion. A platonic friendship may, indeed, subsist between people of different sexes at that age.—Benevolent sensations, and wishes for each other's happiness, may ensue; but those keen feelings of love, hope—despair, and a vacuum, when the object is absent, cannot possibly agitate the bosom of any man for a woman of Mrs. Orbin's age.

Ah! you are too severe, said I, laughing; pray don't talk to her of age, or expect never to see her more.

Colonel Hartoy begins to attack her with earnestness.—She assumes girlish airs in their *têtes à têtes*, and declares marriage is too serious a subject, that she will never suffer herself to think about it; and if ever she does marry, it shall be done precipitately, with a firm confidence, and trust in the honour of the man she so distinguishes. He is pleased with her humour, as by that means a settlement will be avoided, and  
her

her *great* fortune at his command. Things are in train, and we are in hopes of our plan's succeeding.

We triumph, dear Almeria. — Yesterday morning Hartoy called on Mrs. Orbin with a licence in his hand—beggd her to attend him to church.—She hesitated.—He pressed.—She laughed, and accompanied him.—They were married, and set out immediately for a snug house in Kent, which his friend had provided for the occasion. In a few days he will sing, “O misery,” &c.

Nothing is talked of but this marriage. The men envy his good fortune, and some women envy her possession of him. Mrs. Herbert is amazed at it, pities her folly, and prognosticates she *must* be unhappy from the disparity of age between them.

Mrs. Hartoy has been on her knees, and confessed she has deceived her husband.—

band.—*Love*, all-powerful love the motive.—He has raged, stormed, and flown to his dear Victoria to alleviate his sorrows. The world laughs. — She has threatened to sue him for a maintenance, and, to prevent farther talk, he has settled two hundred a year on her, and retired to France with his mistress. She concealed her annuity from him, which augments her salary ; so she is perfectly contented, and determined to go and reside at Exeter, where she may live in a genteel stile upon her income. She is grateful to us for having thus provided for her ; and we highly delighted at the mortification the insolent Hartoy endures, and will endure, for it will be long before he can shew his face in England.

Mrs. Herbert is among the few who pity him for having been thus duped, and detests the name of Orbin, declaring she is ashamed of having been acquainted with such a character. If she knew the part  
your

your friend and Mrs. Nugent acted in this affair, how she would condemn us!

We have made a proper example of him, and are sufficiently revenged for the epithets he bestowed on us. It is much better he should be Orbin's dupe, than that he should have duped me, though that was never likely to be the case, as I always disliked him. As you are to be in town in a few days, I shall not expect to hear from you.—It will give me infinite pleasure to see you.

Seymour has made excursions from Oxford several times. It is amazing to me, Mrs. Herbert observes not his love! He gazes on her at times in Mr. Herbert's absence with much passion.—His voice falters—he changes colour, and makes high professions of friendship.—It is astonishing, I say, she does not observe it! but I don't think she has the least idea of his having any sentiment but friendship



for her, and is continually recommending matrimony to him with earnestness.

Conway is below ; I must therefore bid you adieu.—We shall soon, I hope, laugh together at my revenge on that wretch Hartoy. If Mrs. Herbert knew it how angry she would be.

Yours, &c.

H. ALBERT.

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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

*Brook-Street.*

**I**T is humiliating, my dear Selina, to be regarded as an object of pity. — It is heart-rending to have affection returned with indifference and perfidy.—I have long experienced

experienced at periods deep affliction—yet my heart is not callous, my sensibility of sorrow keen as ever. The tender myrtle droops when too keen a wind attacks it; sun-shine and a calm restores it to its vigour, but too frequent storms bends it to the earth; it falls to rise no more.—Perhaps it may be my lot, Selina, to sink under repeated afflictions.

Mr. Herbert has purchased a small estate in Staffordshire, with a house, called “The Elms;” it is situate on the edge of a beautiful wood. Thither we shall go in a few days, and I have been preparing and arranging things for our departure, as we are not to return to town till November. Harriot and myself were recommended to a person who had gold muslins to dispose of cheap, and likewise some French lute-strings for this season. The carriage was at the door, and we descending the stairs, when we were met by Count Melfleur and Mr. Seymour. I will not be disappointed, said I, in a gay tone—busi-

ness must be done, will you attend us, Gentlemen, to buy bargains? They willingly complied (though we wished not for their company) and handed us into the carriage. — We drove away to Jermyn-Street; a chariot stopt our proceeding to the door. — I put my head out, and saw Mr. Herbert handing Mrs. Delville (who I had seen twice before) into the carriage. My heart beat.—I felt inward convulsions, and did not draw back my head till the carriage drove off, lest they should ask who impeded our passage. Our coach stopped; they observed not my agitations, Count Melfleur and Mr. Seymour being rallying Miss Albert on some of her lovers.

I passively, and rather stupidly, let Seymour hand me out of the carriage.—He started, and looking stedfastly at me, asked if I was ill.—Was it not judicious to feign indisposition? I complained of a violent pain in my head; had I said at my heart, I should have spoke truth.

Seymour

Seymour, who you know is compassionate and friendly, turned to the Count and Harriot, saying "Mrs. Herbert is ill, we had better return to Brook-Street."

By no means, said I; Miss Albert knows I am often attacked with this complaint, and soon recover. — I must make a purchase, and entered the house. There were some Ladies there viewing the goods. — Harriot took up a beautiful gold muslin: Mrs. Symonds, what is the price of this? said she, I am enchanted with it.

I am very sorry, Madam, returned she, I have no more of that pattern; a Mr. Herbert has just bought it for Mrs. Delville, who was with him, a good customer of mine.

And a most infamous creature, said an old Gentleman (who was looking at some silks;) unfortunately she is my next door neighbour.—Mr. Herbert vainly imagines she is constant to him, but it is well known

many share her favours.—Such creatures are the ruin of families.—His Lady, I am told, is a most worthy and amiable woman, and frequently, indeed, do I pity her destiny, though she is a stranger to me.

Count Melfleur fixed his eyes on me, and sighed.—Seymour at first seemed petrified with horror, then whispered Miss Albert, who requested to see some silks.

I suppose I was pale as ashes. — My heart palpitated.—I was in a cold sweat, and felt myself ready to faint.

Count Melfleur led me to a chair.—My dear Madam be seated, said he; then turning aside, uttered, “Scoundrel.” — There was a humanity in his manner. — Seymour appeared so greatly agitated he could not act. — He stood petrified, and pale as death. Miss Albert was much hurt.—She teased the people to shew us things—commended and discommended—  
said



said she was not well, should we call another time ?

By no means, I answered, with a forced smile.—Opportunity was not to be lost, as our stay in London was so short. — I bought one muslin and one silk dress. — She pleased herself, and we all returned home in penfive moods.

Harriot was engaged to Lady M——'s rout; I was not to accompany her.—She said the West-Indian was to be acted that evening, she wished to see it — requested me to go with her, and the Gentlemen offered to accompany us.

The reason of this proposal of hers was evident.—I pleaded indisposition. — Mr. Seymour said, if I found myself ill, he would attend me home; but he flattered himself it would amuse me. Without alluding to the past scene, he spoke with such real friendship, and wish of alleviating my sorrow, I could not refuse him.

We went.—After the play I retired, finding myself much indisposed, and Miss Albert went to Lady M——'s rout.

A true delicacy subsisted in their behaviour.—Melfleur's was proper, all but the exclamation, yet my sufferings were great. — Happy, happy, Selina! you are independent. — The infidelity of a *husband* cannot rack your heart—but it is my duty to submit to Providence. — If possible, I will not murmur; yet how frail, how impotent, are human resolutions! — We wish to overcome the sensations nature implanted in our breasts.—Alas! we find it impossible to eradicate them!

I laid down my pen, dear Selina, with a full determination of becoming mistress of resignation and fortitude sufficient to allay my grief.—I yielded myself to repose, with blessing Heaven for affluence, the deprivation of which renders so many wretched. I have little to bestow on the necessitous; had I more it should be  
their s

theirs. To extend the hand of comfort to the famished and afflicted is a real luxury; for that reason I sometimes lament my infatuation in surrendering myself to a master.—I love him — but, alas! what a fate. You, my dear friend, had too much sense to consign yourself to such misery.—You have made choice of happy independence; yet, oh! situated as I am, is it not almost criminal in me to confess I rather envy your destiny, and avow, that was I again free, no consideration on earth should allure me to embrace the marriage yoke. To be despised, neglected for the most infamous of women—pity my feelings, Selina!

I went down to breakfast dispirited. — Miss Albert was engaged to Lady Almeria. Mr. Herbert soon retired, and I sat absorbed in a reverie, when Count Melfleur entered.

He looked pale and ill; I enquired after his health.—Most amiable and best of

women, said he, forgive me, when I confess your sorrow made me pass a sleepless night.—My friendship and respect for you, and the knowledge I have of your character, made me sensible repose must be banished your virtuous bosom, from the discovery yesterday of Mr. Herbert's infamous attachment to Mrs. Delville—notwithstanding your uncommon fortitude in Jermyn-Street, your seeing him with her (for I observed them too) and the old Gentleman's execration of Mr. Herbert's conduct was sufficient to almost annihilate a heart so tender and faithful as yours. — Could I reclaim him, what pleasure would it afford me?—Yet, advising you as I do, your happiness alone is the summit of my wishes.

Leave me, Count, said I, bursting into tears; do not farther insult and humiliate me.

Mr. Herbert was in an adjoining apartment, and overheard what passed: He burst

burst into the room in a great rage—abused the Count for interfering in his family concerns, and daring to insult me with a declaration of his love, bidding him instantly quit his house, and never presume to re-enter it.

Count Melfleur was mortified at Mr. Herbert's discovery of his passion, and found it was impossible longer to dissemble. — He in turn became enraged, and in virulent language reprobated Mr. Herbert's conduct, which, he said, left me open to the attacks of unprincipled libertines, as well as those who set a just value on my virtues ; at the same time declaring nothing but the respect he had for me with-held him from demanding satisfaction for the affront he put on him, by forbidding him the house.

Mr. Herbert looked at him scornfully, and made no answer.—The Count then turned to me, and, bowing, said, amiable,



and most worthy of your sex, adieu — perhaps for ever. — Oh ! adieu, and with haste hurried out of the house.

Mr. Herbert for some moments remained silent. — “ Such is the friendship of Frenchmen,” said he at last. However, Laura, you are not blameable for his insolence. — As to my being in Jermyn-Street with Mrs. Delville, it was merely accidental, and I am not accountable to any one for *my* conduct. — If you make yourself uneasy about my being seen with another woman, you must be a fool, for while you behave with propriety, I shall continue to esteem you ; so saying, he honoured me with a cool salute on the cheek, and left me to melancholy reflection. May the Almighty amend his heart. Convince him of his errors, and put an end to my afflictions ; and may you continue to enjoy peace and happiness in this world, and, after a long life, enter eternal felicity

A RASH VOW. 119

felicity in the next, is the very sincere  
wish of

Your unalterable friend,

LAURA HERBERT.

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MISS ALBERT,

T O

LADY ALMERIA.

**H**OW I do detest shady groves and  
chrystal streams. — I am quite *à la*

~~made~~ — Time passes with leaden wings. —

Five months longer have I to remain  
here; oh! dreadful. — I wish I could  
pass them like the sleeping princess I  
read of in my childhood, and awake in  
dear London. The drawing-room has  
been *clouded* (I will call it instead of  
crouded) with 'squires and their wives,  
parsons and their wives, and lawyers with  
their wives, with their appendages, whose  
conversation

110 ILL EFFECTS OF

conversation was almost annihilating—too insignificant to awake satire, and too dull to understand wit. As an addition to the mortification I endure, my guardian has thought proper to forbid Conway's visiting us in this retreat, and alledges, as an unanswerable reason, the impropriety of admitting in the country a married man, who treats me with a gallantry which might *here* sully my fair fame. This whim of his is truly provoking, and to prevent my becoming quite a victim to ennui and chagrin, I have permitted Conway to correspond with me secretly. His letters will invigorate my spirits, and keep me in humour with myself, by convincing me I am not neglected by him. Commiserate my situation, and write long epistles to

Yours, &c.

H. ALBERT.

FROM

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FROM THE SAME,

T O

THE SAME.

*The Elms.*

**T**HIS morning I was so lucky as to have a transient interview with Lord Conway, and was witness to a scene which was near ending tragically. Mrs. Herbert and I strolled out into the wood, not knowing how better to amuse ourselves. We had not entered it long before Count Melfleur threw himself at her feet. — She started with surprise, and intreated him to leave us. He looked in agony and despair, and in the most strenuous manner requested only her pity, which, he said, would be some alleviation to his misery. She answered him philosophically, and represented to him how fatal it would be to her character and future peace, if Mr.

Herbert

Herbert should be informed of his rashness, entreating him to avoid her in future.

I will obey you, dear, cruel, unfeeling Laura, said he, and taking a pistol from his pocket, pointed it to his forehead, with desperation and madness on his countenance. — I will rid you of a wretch you detest, said he, and was going to discharge the contents, when Lord Conway rushed from behind the trees, and knocked it out of his hand; in the scuffle it went off, but fortunately did no damage.—Mrs. Herbert, whose nerves you know are very weak, in the interim fainted! Melfleur flew to her—bathed her face with his tears, and embraced her; it was to no purpose I reproved him. Conway said a thousand tender things, and informed me he could not prevent the Count from pursuing this scheme of seeing Mrs. Herbert, on which he resolved to come with him, in hopes of seeing me—but that he had no idea of his having an intention to destroy himself.

The



The explosion of the pistol alarmed the servants.—We heard several of them running towards us. Melfleur snatched a last embrace from my friend as she lay senseless, and Conway forced him away to his place of concealment.

I made one of the men run home for Lucy, and proper restoratives, and said a strange man had fired off a pistol, which had frightened their mistress. — In a little time she came to herself, and in about an hour was able to be led home, and retire to recompose her spirits. I believe, had not Conway blessed me with his presence, I should have been in a similar case with Mrs. Herbert; but the opportunity of a few moments conversation with him was not to be lost.—I roused myself, and farther settled our future correspondence, which is to be carried on with your assistance.

Notwithstanding Conway's boasting of the strength of his passion, I believe he  
would

would never give me so sincere a proof of it as the Count has Mrs. Herbert, *was* I cruel ? She is fortunate in meeting with faithful lovers, for I believe Seymour would die to serve her, yet she is no beauty. — I protest, Almeria, I almost envy her fascinating power, and should not be displeased if a lover of mine, ardent as the Count, should put a period to his life for my sake—to overhear people say, “ Lord —— actually died for love of Miss Albert,” would flatter my vanity, and intoxicate me with joy. Conway and the Count are going to Paris, from whence I am soon to hear from the former.

Adieu,

H. ALBERT.

MISS

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MISS ALBERT,

TO

LADY ALMERIA.

*The Elms.*

**T**HE period of my banishment from London is compleated, and to-morrow we set out for that dear seat of delight, where life only can be enjoyed. There I hope soon to see Conway, who I had a long epistle from yesterday with yours.

He informs me he has passed his time dismally with the unhappy Count Mel-fleur, who, unable to conquer his passion for Mrs. Herbert, has entered volunteer in the East-India company's service, and is actually gone like a mad-man to meet death honourably. I would give a high premium

premium to possess so sincere a lover. — Mrs. Herbert (who I informed of his departure) is shocked at his rashness. — She pities, but does not love him.

Seymour, two months since, came here to take leave, previous to his setting out on his travels. Mr. Herbert was gone a rambling, and did not return for a month, so he did not see him, as his time was limited. He bid a tender adieu to Mrs. Herbert, and seemed as if he left his soul behind him when he departed. — She wished him health and every happiness. He thanked her for her friendship and good wishes; but at the same time seemed afflicted to perceive it was only friendship she displayed for him void of passion. I will soon write again — being now rather hurried in taking leave of rustics and packing; so adieu,

H. ALBERT.

FROM

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FROM THE SAME,

T O

THE SAME.

*Brook-Street.*

I AM almost wild with joy.—Lady Conway died about two months ago at Paris.—The dear creature has gained my guardian's consent that I should become his wife in a fortnight, at which Mrs. Herbert murmurs much, and talks of our waiting a decent time before we marry.—We heed her not, and luckily old *guardée* is glad to get rid of his charge—so her sage advice is vain. I am so busily employed in preparing finery on this happy occasion, that I have not time to be more explicit. Soon as the nuptial  
knot



knot is tied we set out for Paris, and intend staying there some time.

Yours, sincerely,

H. ALBERT.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

As the correspondence during two years between Mrs. Herbert and her friend were on trifling subjects, unimportant to this history, I have suppressed them. Colonel Hartoy's Victoria deserted him for a French Marquis, and Count Melfleur died in India. During that period Lord and Lady Conway resided at Paris and its environs, I therefore re-commence their correspondence at the time of her Ladyship's return to England.

MRS.

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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

*Brook-Street.*

LORD and Lady Conway, my dear Selina, are one of the most fashionable couples in town—quite in the Parisian taste.—She is followed by a train of admirers (which you know was always the summit of her wishes) and his Lordship as much admired and engaged by our sex. They are satisfied with each other's conduct, and, to outward appearance, are perfectly happy. I have taken the liberty of remonstrating with her Ladyship on the impropriety of a married woman's encouraging illicit addresses; she laughed at my prudery.—I demanded, whether sometimes exhausted by a life of dissipation, and

and in the solitary hour of night (or rather morning) when she could not sleep, she did not feel a conviction of mispending her time—or ever considered she was mortal and accountable for her conduct to a superior Being? She started—then answered it was time enough for her to think of a future state: I was pleased to find I had caused some emotion in her mind, and proceeded to convince her of the uncertainty of human life by various examples. I drew two characters in their dying moments — one full of composure and hope of a happy futurity, the reward of their *virtue*; the other full of horror, doubt, and almost despair, at the reflection of a mispent life, though, perhaps they might not have been guilty of atrocious sins.

She stopped me from proceeding. —  
 “For Heaven’s sake desist, said she; you have a manner of delivering your sentiments that affects the heart! You shock me! I will consider on what you have said—but, indeed, my dear Mrs. Herbert,  
 love

love of praise is natural to all, and what harm can there be in listening to soft nonsense from men I despise?"

The danger, my dear Lady Conway, is in the chance of meeting with a man that may become too agreeable to you.—By listening to him you may unguard yourself, and one fatal moment may render you criminal indeed.

Impossible! said she, blushing, rather with anger at the supposition. The seeds of virtue are deeply rooted in my heart, and I never can become the dupe of any man.

I was going to say too great self-confidence was dangerous, when we were interrupted by company, who eagerly enquired after her health; for she looked pale. The conversation which had passed certainly affected her in a small degree; she complained of a head ach; they persuaded

her to go to an auction, and I took my leave.

Young people in general look through so deep a telescope at old age, as if they thought it would never arrive to them; yet consider not that no age is exempt from death, and that in the height of pleasures they are pursuing, they may drop. I really think, my Selina, Harriot has a good heart, but its amiable qualities lay dormant, and are overpowered by an inordinate desire of admiration, and the follies of fashionable life! — Fortunately she has no propensity to gaming—the only dangerous and fashionable folly she deviates from. — She stands over the tables listening to some of her admirers, and is perfectly contented with their adoration and displaying her charms.

It is near a month since I lessoned her. She has taken particular care to never meet me alone since, being denied at home,



home, or calling accompanied by Mrs. Nugent, Lady Almeria, or some friend ; otherwise coming of an evening when I had company : It shews a consciousness she acts wrong, but cannot conquer her leading passion for coquetry.—I sincerely pity her.—Had she married Charles Seymour, he might, perhaps, have reclaimed her.

I suppose you have heard from Lady Seymour.—They have been in town three days, expecting their son to return from his travels, and as his Lordship cannot bear the town air, have taken a house at Hampstead. Lady Seymour informs me, that before Mr. Seymour went abroad, they requested him to pay his addressees to Miss Smith, who was an orphan of large fortune ; but that he absolutely refused, and Lord Seymour was angry with him concerning it, and very unhappy at his dislike of entering the marriage state. Miss Smith it seems is now married to Mr. Monson, and is very intimate with

Lady Conway, at whose house I have often seen her, but was unacquainted with this circumstance. She is a lively woman, and affects wit, which she possesses only the shadow of; and, if I am not mistaken, is gayer in principles than Lady Conway.

Present my sincere affection to Louisa. I reflect with pleasure on the few happy days we all past together at the Elms, and wish for summer to again enjoy that pleasure. Adieu, my dear Selina.

I am yours, sincerely,

LAURA HERBERT.

FROM

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FROM THE SAME,

T O

THE SAME.

*Brook-Street.*

**I** HAVE very unexpected intelligence to communicate, my beloved friend—so strange! so unexpected!—I am still greatly confused. Mr. Herbert these two or three days was become more communicative and friendly, and yesterday evening staid at home with me. — I was happy, and strove to entertain him. He informed me of his first marriage, and owned that he had a daughter by that Lady now living. I was astonished, and asked why he had so long concealed it from me, as I should have thought it my duty to act as a Mother by her. I wished not, said he, to spend any part of your fortune on her :

G 3

I boarded

I boarded her in a clergyman's family in Yorkshire, near York; there she has been introduced to genteel families, and is now going two and twenty years of age, but I find does not meet with any eligible offer. I think, therefore, to bring her home, in hopes she may in this town meet with a husband who will take her without fortune:—In short, my design is to throw her in Charles Seymour's way. — She is handsome, and, perhaps, may attract him; if not, after the winter's run, she must return to Yorkshire. I shall expect you, my dear Laura, to forward my design on Charles, and draw him into her company as much as possible.

This information, my dear Selina, must be sacred.—If Mr. Seymour should become enamoured with her, it will make me very happy; but I will not make use of any art to inveigle him, or conceal her faults, if she has any glaring ones. — A connection for life is a serious affair I have

have no inclination to interfere in.—He shall have opportunities of being in her company, and, if he approves of her, I again say it will give me pleasure, as it will ensure her felicity for life. She is to be here in a few days, and I am preparing an apartment for her.

Adieu,

LAURA HERBERT.

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MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

*Brook-Street.*

I WAS received with open arms by my friend, who enquired much after you. She looks well, and in good health and spirits.—The evening after my arrival we

G 4

were



were sitting alone, when Charles Seymour rushed into the room. "My dear friends, said he, embracing us, how are you? How happy I am at once more beholding you, said he, snatching Mrs. Herbert's hand in an extacy;—tell me you are well:—Your looks proclaim it, and I am happy."—"Had I been ill, said she, the sight of an old friend would have proved more efficacious than medicine, and, believe me, I shall always be happy to see my dear Lady Seymour's son."

"You are very good, said he, in confusion, at having been off his guard (for I now am certain our suspicion was well founded) and my beloved cousin has likewise enjoyed health and happiness, I hope, said he, turning to me.—I am going to Hampstead, and, with your permission, my dear Madam (to Mrs. Herbert) will take a dish of coffee first. With pleasure, said she, ringing the bell to order it.

That

That he adores her, my dear Louisa, is very evident. — She seemed surpris'd at his earnestness, and confus'd rather. — I shall soon have a daughter to present to you, Mr. Seymour, said she, almost as old as yourself: I hope you will grant her your friendship on her parents account.

What is this jest? said he.

It is a daughter of Mr. Herbert's, said she, smiling, who he did not chuse to introduce into life before; and I please myself much at the idea of having an agreeable female companion, which I have long wanted. She will be here to-morrow. — The next day she will attend us to dinner at Hampstead.

All your friends will rejoice, said he, at any event that contributes to your happiness. She stepped into the next room to speak to some person, when Charles took the opportunity to whisper me, he feared the girl in temper would be too

like her Father to afford our amiable friend any comfort.

After sitting with us two hours, he took a reluctant leave. He is exceedingly improved in understanding and manners. — Laura observed it, and said she found Mr. Herbert's wishes would prove abortive, as a mere country girl with beauty only would not be sufficient to please a man of refined taste. I will now lay aside my pen, for as I sent you a line to inform you of my safe arrival, this epistle shall proceed journal wise.

Miss Herbert is arrived. — She is quite in Lady Conway's stile of beauty, which you know is Seymour's aversion. — Her behaviour proves she has been in genteel company, and instead of *mauvais honte*, she has a staring confidence, which Harriot much approves. Mr. Herbert seems dissatisfied with her, and laid his strict commands on her to obey Mrs. Herbert's injunctions; at the same time requesting  
the

the latter to model his daughter's conduct by her own, which is a flattering compliment to Laura. Alas! why does *he* not do justice to so amiable a creature, instead of deserting her for an infamous wanton, at an age too that he *must*, or at least *ought* to, expect dissolution.

The visit to Hampstead has been paid. Lord and Lady Seymour (I could perceive in their conversation with me) have an unfavourable opinion of Miss Herbert. Indeed, she possesses a boldness the more surprising, as she has been educated in the country. — Charles Seymour seemed quite disgusted at her manner. I took an opportunity of saying, "How do you like the new daughter of my Laura?" Of your *Laura*? said he, prolonging the accent with fondness — she will, I fear, my dear cousin, prove a viper to sting her; yet she is Mr. Herbert's daughter, and I must not at present speak my sentiments of her, even to you. Heaven preserve our worthy friend from farther misfortunes.

This hint convinced me that Mr. Herbert will be disappointed in his scheme, and that Charles has a prior passion for Mrs. Herbert, founded on esteem, purity of sentiment, and respect for her virtues, which, I fear, will embitter his future days, if he cannot conquer it. He has hitherto refused every offer of marriage made by his parents. Just before he went abroad, they proposed to him an heiress of large fortune, which match he declined. The young Lady is now married to the Hon. Mr. Monson, and is a particular friend of Lady Conway's (they met at Paris) a Lady of high ton like herself, but whose character is rather suspected. Lord and Lady Conway, and Mrs. Monson, take particular notice of Miss Herbert, and invite her to all their parties, which is not agreeable to Mrs. Herbert, or, indeed, Mr. Herbert. — They have ordered her to excuse herself from attending them (on account of Mrs. Monson) as often as it can be done consistent with civility.

Charles



Charles always attends Lord and Lady Seymour on their visits here, but never scarce calls alone.—Mr. Herbert has observed his dislike to Charlotte, and is mortified at it; he therefore now permits her to attend Lady Conway more frequently, in hopes she may get a husband amidst the gay circles. Mrs. Herbert, as well as myself, think him blameable in that point.—There is more probability of her losing her character (giddy as she is) than in her gaining a husband. Her conversation is flippant, and she is sometimes very impertinent to my gentle friend, which I can perceive hurts her. Fortunately Charles has formed a true idea of her unamiable disposition, and is very careful of his conduct to Mrs. Herbert; for was Charlotte to conceive the least suspicion of his sentiments for Laura—I am certain she would be malevolent enough to sow discord between her Father and my friend on that account. She has a bad heart, Louisa. I was yesterday in  
company

company with her, Lady Conway, and Mrs. Nugent.—She with unconcern asked them if it was true her Father had a mistress, called Delville.—Lady Conway seemed surpris'd at the question, and her manner of asking it. — She answered in the affirmative — blamed Mr. Herbert, and pitied his wife. Charlotte laughed, and said she saw no harm in it; that he paid Mrs. Herbert a proper respect, and she thought had a right to please himself. Gay as Lady Conway is, she seemed shocked at her sentiments.—Whatever is your opinion, Charlotte, said she, on such subjects, let me, as a friend, advise you to conceal them. You should never defend glaring vice.—Mrs. Herbert I truly revere.—She is worthy the sole affection of your Father, and every woman has a right to expect fidelity from a husband.

Dear Lady Conway, answered she, you surprise me! Why don't my Lord's attention to other Ladies disturb you then?

Because

Because I consider it mere gallantry, and think I only am in possession of his heart. Well then, said Charlotte, laughing, Mrs. Herbert had better think so too.

Lady Conway was surprised, and displeased with her, and said to me in Italian (which Charlotte does not understand) it is very strange this girl should pick up such sentiments at the parsonage.

I coincided with her opinion, and we concluded she must have fallen into improper company. Lady Conway, said she, would take another opportunity of drawing from her acquaintance she had there, and inform me.

Miss Herbert was full of scandalous anecdotes this morning at breakfast.—She was out late last night with Mrs. Monson. She informed us that Lady C—— was gone off with Col. H——, and that she perceived

perceived Mr. Seymour was not averſe to gallantry, though he diſliked matrimony; for though he would not marry Miſs Smith, he was become ciſſes to Mrs. Monſon, and this intimacy was viſible.— Would you inſinuate, ſaid I, plainly, with a ſmile, that my couſin Charles has criminal intercourſe with the woman he reſuſed to marry.

You are ſo rigid, I fear ſpeaking my ſentiments, ſaid ſhe, laughing; but I overheard Lord Conway rallying him, and his answer was — “ Well enough for amuſement.”

I thought Charles was not of ſo libertine a diſpoſition, ſaid I; but I hope it is not true, as I cannot think Mrs. Monſon would be really guilty. — If I thought it true, I ſhould withdraw my frienſhip from him, and ſhe would be a very improper companion for a virtuous young Lady.

Bleſs

Bless me, my dear Miss Montague, you know she is a woman of fashion, who is universally received in the polite world.— Why should we shrink from her, she cannot contaminate us. As to Mr. Seymour, he will be better received in the world for his spirit : Don't you think so, Madam ? addressing Mrs. Herbert.

I had a better opinion of Mr. Seymour's morals, returned she ; but his gallantry is nothing to us, and I shall always receive him with friendship as the son of Lady Seymour, one of my *best* friends.

I watched the countenance of Laura, my dear Louisa, and could not perceive the least emotion, from whence I judge she has no partiality for *him*, whatever he may have, and certainly has, for her.

I had a private interview this morning with Lady Conway, who informed me she had employed Mrs. Monson to draw from Miss Herbert the method of her passing  
her



her time in the country, and an account of her friends there. She dislikes me, said her Ladyship, since the gentle rebuke I gave her, and, indeed, I thought the girl by much too forward. Mrs. Monson, who I do not so much approve as I did, I therefore thought would with more ease beguile her of the truth. It seems about a year since a Mr. and Mrs. Murray came to the hunting-house of Sir Harry Bell, near the parsonage, and got acquainted with the simple priest and his wife—the consequence of which was, Charlotte passed most of her time with them, and at last got so far into the good graces of the Lady, that she owned, under the veil of secrecy, her real name was Lady —, and that she had been so unfortunate as to be divorced from Lord —, and had since concealed herself with Mr. —, under the name of Murray. Sir Harry visited there several times, and Miss Herbert spoke much in his favour. At length this infamous couple quarrelled and parted. Mr.

Murray

Murray went off—the Lady pretended she was going to retire to France, and offered to take Miss Herbert with her. The priest refused, and she went away; since which Charlotte says she has heard nothing of her, and that no one but herself in those parts knew who her Ladyship was; that she had been much obliged to her for instructing her in the manners of polite life, without which she should have arrived in town a mere rustic, though she visited the neighbouring gentry, and attended the races at York.

Then you find, my dear Louisa, this poor girl has unfortunately imbibed immoral opinions from an infamous woman, whom chance threw in her way, and the worthy people she was with, through ignorance, permitted her to have too great an intimacy with. Mrs. Herbert, upon the knowledge of this, has determined she shall visit Mrs. Monson very seldom, and only with her, lest that Lady should prove in principle like Lady ——. It is

a great pity Lady Conway is so attached to pleasure, and the love of admiration ; for she certainly has a good heart, and we flatter ourselves will grow weary of her present taste, and become a respectable character.

Charles called here this morning. — Mrs. Herbert was out. — How uncertain are human opinions, said I, cousin Charles ! and how unlucky was it you was not sensible of Mrs. Monson's charms when she was Miss Smith ! You might then have become her husband.

Who told you I think her charming now ? said he, rather confused.

I was told you publicly admired her, returned I ; a foreign tour, I fear, has not improved your morals — Pardon the liberty I take — old maids you know will be severe.

Your

Your information, said he, apparently vexed, came from the malevolent Miss Herbert, I suppose. Miss Smith I would not have married on any account. — To trifle in public you know is the ton; but I hope, my dear cousin, you and Mrs. Herbert do not consider me as a libertine.

What we think of you is immaterial. — We have neither of us fashionable opinions, and what you gay people think harmless, we think criminal; addressing a *married* woman for example, said I, smiling.

Surely my saying a few civil things to her cannot constitute criminality; but I would see her —, and never speak to her more, sooner than forfeit the good opinion and friendship of yourself and your Laura, traversing the room in great emotion.

You

You are warm, Charles, said I, smiling. Neither Laura or myself have any right to restrain your pleasures. — As for my friend, I never had any conversation with her concerning it—but as you are *my* relation, and I have a great regard for you, I wish you to remain amiable in my eyes. In the sight of the world you will not be less so for your gallantries.

He continued walking about the room in seeming perturbation of mind, when Mrs. Herbert entered. She perceived he was in great agitation; I therefore thought it best to laugh it off. I have been rallying cousin Charles on his gallantry to Mrs. Monson, said I, and believe he is almost angry with me.

You are very impertinent, said she, blushing, to reprove him for a conduct that will establish his character in the gay world, and make them allow he has improved by travel.

She



She smiled as she spoke — but he felt the severity of her speech more than all I had said before.—He seemed cut to the heart, and for a moment unable to answer.—At last he said, the approbation of the world was not his ambition, and would render him wretched if he lost the good opinion of those he respected, and so truly felt a friendship for, as Mrs. Herbert and myself.

O! said I, laughing, you may still retain our friendship and good wishes, tho' you have lost our good opinion.

This was too much—tears flood in his eyes.—He turned to Laura, and taking her hand (I observed his trembled) said, have I lost your good opinion, Madam?

She waved a direct answer, and said, you may be assured, Mr. Seymour, that, however blameable your conduct, I shall always wish you well and happy.—The way to become so, is to fix on some amiable

able young Lady for a wife.—Domestic happiness, you once told me, would constitute your felicity ; the sooner the better, before you emerge into a life of dissipation, after which it will be too late to expect happiness in the marriage state.

I see I have lost your friendship, said he (turning still paler) and you believe the assertion of some one who is my enemy. Surely saying a few silly things to a vain woman in public, could not be criminal.—The character of a libertine I detest ; can you think me such a wretch ?

We will change the subject, if you please, said she ; how did you like the Opera last night ?

The subject must not be changed, said he, in agony, till you assure me, my dear Mrs. Herbert, I am still possessed of the place in your esteem, I had before this infamous report and false insinuation reached your ears.—Selina must likewise  
do

do the same, or I shall be miserable.—To a mind like mine, to lose the esteem of friends I so highly revere, would be almost *death* !

He spoke with such energy, I thought the business became rather too serious, and that Laura was hurt and embarrassed ; therefore, laughing, I held out my hand—here, salute it, Charles, said I ; I here do declare, in presence of Mrs. Herbert, that you still retain the same place in my esteem as heretofore ; and to set your mind at ease, Laura, will, I make no doubt, follow my example. He snatched my hand, and put it to his lips—dear, kind cousin, I thank you, said he.—May I, (timidly advancing to Laura) hope for the same indulgence. — She smiled, and extended her hand, saying, Selina, you know, always commands me, and repeated similar words to mine. He pressed her hand to his lips (while his cheeks flushed) eagerly, and said, now I am happy, indeed. Ah ! what is the world to a heart

like mine, compared to the good opinion of those I so highly value?

My amiable friend blushed, and looked confused.—A general conversation ensued, and, with reluctance, in an hour he was compelled to take his leave. When he was gone she reproved me for renewing the subject on her entrance.—I wished, said she, to (seemingly) remain ignorant of his conduct, as the friendship I professed for him before he went abroad, and knowing him from a child, I thought, required I should reprove him, if I appeared acquainted with it. Another reason was, I did not like to appear interested in his conduct—as you must observe, Selina, that since his return from abroad, his expressions of friendship to me are warmer; and I must own it hurts me, and makes me recollect the line of the poet, that

*“Friendship with women is sister to love.”*

Has

Has it not struck you, that he has been swayed a little by his tutor's lessons, and seems more disposed to gallantry than he was before he left England. I regard him as a brother, having known him from a child as well as you, and sincerely wish to see him married; but I should be better pleased if he did not offer his friendship with such warmth and energy, it rather exceeds the calm feelings of friendship.

My dear Laura, said I, you have at last discovered what I did before he left England.—He has the sincerest and most respectful passion for you. — Your good opinion he cannot bear to lose; and it is in your power to turn him from a life of dissipation and folly, and make him continue a respectable character. — To preserve your esteem he will emancipate himself from gaiety. It gives me pain to find you confirm my suspicion of his sentiments for me, said she, and I am per-



plexed how to act to so old a friend.—It is very surprising he should feel a passion for me, who am seven years his senior, and so unformed to please a gay young man.—I pity his infatuation—yet cannot reprove him, as he never offered any thing but friendship.—Should I treat him with unusual coolness, it would prove my suspicion, and I think it is better for him to remain ignorant in that point. All I can do is to avoid him as much as possible, consistent with our family connections, and hope that time and absence will eradicate his present predilection. In the mean time I will take advantage of the influence I have over him, to preserve him from becoming a libertine if I can. — Would to Heaven he would marry some amiable woman—he would then be cured of this ignoble and criminal passion, and be again my brother; for I assure you, Selina, as such only I esteem him; and was I otherwise situated, ever would.

She

She thinks so, cousin, and I remained silent—though I can perceive she feels more than friendship for him, and at present deceives herself. — If she survives Mr. Herbert, they would, I think, be the happiest couple existing, as their sentiments are in unison; and it would give me inexpressible pleasure to see so dear a friend rewarded in this world for her past troubles.

A fortnight has passed, during which Charles has avoided Mrs. Monson; or, when they meet, treated her with a distant coldness. Miss Herbert says she is visibly hurt at his slighting her. Lady Conway has taken a great dislike to Charlotte, and seems much displeased with his Lordship for paying her common civilities, for in my presence nothing else has passed; and I was very attentive, as I thought I discovered something like jealousy in her Ladyship, which surprised me the more as she gives herself such latitude in

H 3

flirting,

150 ILL EFFECTS OF

flirting, and till now has been very indifferent concerning his Lordship's behaviour to her acquaintance. The Seymours set off for Devonshire to-morrow, and next week I hope to meet you in perfect health.

Yours, sincerely,

S. MONTAGUE.

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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

*Brook-Street.*

THINKING it my duty to watch over Charlotte with vigilance, I have, to oblige Mr. Herbert (who thought it the only way to give her a chance of getting a husband) and please her, ever  
since

since your departure, been plunged in a tontine of fashionable amusements, which has almost exhausted my strength and spirits. I thank God, in a short time I shall return to the Elms, and enjoy retirement. My heart feels a very pleasing sensation at the thoughts of seeing you and Louisa there, and spending my days in a more rational manner. Mr. Herbert is very fretful at his daughter's not having made an eligible conquest, and his disappointment in not being able to settle her in life has very much sowered his temper. He has told her, that when we leave town she must return to the parsonage, at which idea she is very unhappy, well knowing he is resolute, and that any entreaties of hers or mine would be ineffectual. I must confess to my dearest Selina, that the parting with her will not give me pain, as she is frequently very insolent to me, which Mr. Herbert having at times observed, severely reprov'd her for. Col. Hartoy is returned to England, and re-

ceived as before his departure, which Lady Conway seems displeased at; why I cannot tell, as he suffered for his folly in pursuing wealth. Her Ladyship's dislike to Charlotte you observed before your departure from London; it has rather increased.—Indeed, at periods, I observed Lord Conway rather too gallant to Miss Herbert, and have given him looks of severe reproof. This observation lessened my surprise at her Ladyship's sudden aversion to a girl she was fond of, as Lady Conway certainly loves his Lordship with the sincerest affection, notwithstanding her propensity to flirtation.

A violent head-ach obliges me to lay aside my pen. I will resume it in a few days; mean time am as usual,

Your truly affectionate,

L. HERBERT.

MRS.



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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

*The Elms.*

— “Grief is to man as certain as the grave.  
Tempests and storms in life’s whole progress rise,  
And hope shines dimly through our clouded skies;  
Some drops of comfort on the favoured fall,  
But showers of sorrow are the lot of all.”

I AM arrived at the Elms, oppressed with sorrow.—Mr. Herbert is extremely indisposed, and in the deepest affliction, and Lady Conway almost sinking under the weight of poignant anguish, occasioned by her Lord’s desertion. — Before this letter reaches your hand, the melancholy intelligence I am going to recite will undoubtedly have come to your knowledge

H 5

through

through the news-papers.—Charlotte, gay, guilty Charlotte, is actually gone off with Lord Conway !

A violent head-ach, the evening I wrote to you last, prevented my attending Miss Herbert to Mrs. Nugent's rout. — She came home at twelve, and finding I was not asleep, called in my chamber to chat a little, and inform me that a party, which Mrs. Nugent had talked of some time before, was fixed on for the next day, and that she was to attend that Lady at eight in the morning—carelessly asking me if I would accompany them. As I often permitted her to visit Mrs. Nugent without me, I told her to make my excuses, as I was very indifferent. She wished me good night, and, as she went out at the door, nodded her head, saying, "Farewel, Madam," with a smile : Tho' I since recollect she spoke the "Farewel" with an emphasis, I, at that period, did not regard it, and soon composed myself to sleep.

The

The next day I found myself much better, and was told at breakfast Charlotte went out early in a hackney chair. — I concluded she was with Mrs. Nugent, and till seven in the evening amused myself with music and reading, when a servant came to inform me Lady Conway was very ill, and in fits, and that her woman intreated (if I was able to stir abroad) that I would immediately come to her Lady. The message shocked me. — I supposed Lord Conway was not to be found, therefore she sent for me. — I repaired thither in haste, and found her Ladyship in strong hysterics.

Her woman presenting me a letter, said, this, Madam, is the cause of my Lady's disorder, and will discover to you the true reason of her illness. — My Lord is not to be found.

The letter was wrote in Italian by Lord Conway, and had been sent her an

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hour

hour before I was sent for ; it contained as follows :

“ As your Ladyship has for a long time been regardless of my affection, and placed all your felicity in encouraging a suite of admirers, I thought it necessary to fix my own happiness, by making choice of a woman who loved me well enough to despise even the censure of the world for me.—In Charlotte Herbert I have found that charming woman, and have left you at liberty to make choice of any one of your admirers you think proper to make happy.—If my conduct gives you any uneasiness (which I cannot suppose) reflect that your own has been the cause, and that, had you adhered to the worthy Mrs. Herbert’s prudent advice, my heart would never have been alienated from you.

CONWAY.”

You may guess, Selina, how extremely shocked I was at perusing this cruel epistle,

epistle, which must have been keen as a two-edged dagger to the miserable Harriot, as he pretends to palliate his guilt by condemning her Ladyship's conduct and folly of coquetry. The shock to me was very severe I felt for Lady Conway.—I pitied the unworthy girl's infatuation, as spite of her insolence to me I had a sincere regard for her, and was deeply afflicted to think what Mr. Herbert would suffer at this discovery. — These united sorrows overpowered me, and I fainted. Barton and some attendants gave me restoratives, which soon recovered me. — In the mean time Harriot fell on my neck, and wept bitterly; and when I came to myself said, Laura, my dear Laura, I have lost him for ever; that infamous girl has stole him from me.—He wishes me to become criminal that he might marry her I plainly see. Oh! I shall go distracted.—Not one heart have I ever been able to fix.—I have lost Conway's; it is too much.—I shall be scorned by the world—perhaps pitied.



pitied. — In that idea there is horror. — Save me — save me ! Take me immediately with you to the Elms, that I may hide this unhappy head from the world. Agony of passion and grief almost choaked her, and she fell into strong hysteric fits. I ordered a servant to fetch Dr. — with all imaginable celerity. — He soon returned with him. — I was obliged to hint it was grief occasioned her illness. — He wrote a prescription, which was made up immediately, and the medicine given her. She became sensible and calmer. — I was myself much indisposed, and obliged to go home, as it was necessary I should communicate the horrid intelligence to my dear Mr. Herbert : I therefore left her, ordering Barton to inform me if she grew worse in the night, and if I did not hear from her I should be there as early as possible in the morning. In my way home I called on Mrs. Nugent, who kindly said she would immediately go to Lady Conway, and pass the night with her

her on a couch, as it was not fit she should be left without some friend, and Lady Almeria was in the country. This was very kind; I thanked her for it, and returned home, where I found Mr. Herbert, who had called at home two hours before, and heard of my being sent for to Lady Conway.—He wondered what was become of her Lord, as he was told at her house (where he followed me) that he was not to be found, and her Ladyship dangerously ill. I burst into tears, and requested him to assume fortitude to receive disagreeable intelligence, which was, his Lordship was gone off with another woman, and that I feared —.

What do you fear, Laura? said he, hastily.—Your sobs—your manner makes me dread.—Impossible! he could not be such a villain as to turn seducer!

Oh! read that, said I, presenting him his Lordship's letter to Harriot, which  
she

she had desired me to retain for that purpose. He stamped, raved, and swore like a distracted man. When overcome with the affliction and fatigue I had underwent, I fainted. Lucy put me to bed. — On recovering my senses, I found Mr. Herbert weeping over me. — Forgive my — passion, my dear Laura, said he, kissing me. — You are a good creature. — This misfortune has happened through my folly ; had I left the imprudent harlot in Yorkshire she would have been safe.

I strove to comfort him. — We passed a sleepless night. — Mr. Herbert grew feverish, and I sent for Dr. — , who attended him, as well as Lady Conway, some days. Poor Harriot, at her own request, was removed to my house, that she might see me often as possible, saying, it was in my power only to afford her the least comfort. I prayed to the Almighty to grant me strength to support this affliction, and comfort friends so dear to me. — Though  
far

far from well, thank God, I continued able to pass my time between Harriot and Mr. Herbert. Mr. Seymour called. — Mr. Herbert chose to see him. — He condoled with us on the melancholy event, and tears stood in his eyes as he spoke. He endeavoured to speak comfort, and hoped Charlotte would soon be sensible of her guilt, and retire to a monastery. — It is impossible, answered Mr. Herbert — her heart is vicious, and will ever remain so ; I therefore will strive to forget I ever had a daughter. I wish I had never permitted her to enter London, then I should not have been thus publicly exposed, nor she have so long tormented this worthy creature (pointing to me) with her pertness, which I, through indulgence too much, overlooked.

You cannot think, my dear Selina, what pleasure this speech of his afforded me. — To be possessed of his esteem is a great satisfaction ; his love may, perhaps, follow,

low, and he may forget Mrs. Delville. — The conclusion of Lord Conway's letter, I think, made some impression on him. If he is convinced of my affection, and returns it, I shall be happy.

Mr. Herbert was then too weak to bear company long. — Mr. Seymour observed it, and took leave. The next morning he called, and desired to speak with me, as Mr. Herbert was in a gentle doze. — I went to the parlour. — He lamented the affliction I was under, and asked if there was any thing in his power to do that would be of service to us: That to see Mr. Herbert, who was his Father's old friend under such deep affliction, was a grief of heart to him, and that he would sacrifice his life if it could be of any benefit to *me*; and from a child I have known you, Madam, continued he, the tears standing in his eyes. — My parents revere you, and I should be very unlike them, indeed, if I did not value and pity so amiable a friend.

I re-



I returned him thanks for his good wishes, and said, I hoped we should soon have fortitude to support a misfortune we could not remedy.

He said, with a sigh, he was come to bid us adieu for a time, as he was going to visit his sisters in Ireland, and took his leave.

A few days after Lady Conway and Mr. Herbert being much better, Dr. — recommended country air, and by slow journies we reached this place. Tardy as our progress had been, they were both extremely fatigued with it. — Mr. Herbert has a lingering, nervous fever, and the sight of poor Harriot, I believe, retards his recovery, as he is shocked to think his daughter is the cause of her sufferings. I am very sorry to observe at times, that vanity causes almost an equal part of sorrow, with her affection for Lord Conway. She is extremely hurt at the  
idea

idea of being forsaken, and that her beauty had not power enough to retain, "even one heart" (her own expression;) it gives me pain to observe it, as it destroys my hope of affliction subduing her propensity for admiration. At times again she condemns her own conduct, which she fears really alienated his affection, and, when alone with me, execrates her rival. I endeavour to compose her at such times, and advise her in future to pass her days among select friends only, as the world know she is separated from her husband, will be more lavish of their censure, if she indulges herself in her late course of life. She receives my advice with good-nature, and promises to be guided by me. I wish for her own sake she would—but I dread her instability.

I will not ask my Selina to come to the house of sorrow; but when time has lessened our grief, hope to see you and Louisa. You well know what pleasure  
your

your company always affords me, and that  
I am ever

Your truly affectionate,

LAURA HERBERT.

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MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

*The Elms.*

L AURA was extremely rejoiced at the unexpected sight of me.—I received a sincere welcome from Mr. Herbert, and Lady Conway embraced me with affection, saying, she must be very ungrateful indeed, if with such sincere friends she did not endeavour to dissipate her grief. They now flatter me, by declaring my presence has been a cordial to them, and mended their health. They wish

wish Mrs. Smith's visit at Villa-Burton had not been so mal-apropos, and prevented your accompanying me here. — We go out airing every morning, and in the evenings amuse ourselves with work and reading; sometimes cards wears out an hour, and last night, for the first time, I proposed music: Laura and I played a few tunes in Allegro, and Mr. Herbert and Harriot bore it very well. If their health continues to amend, I shall propose their receiving company, as solitude only nurses sorrow. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

S. MONTAGUE.

MISS

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MISS MONTAGUE,

TO

MISS GODFREY.

*The Elms.*

IT is now six weeks since company has been admitted. — Lady Conway has almost regained her usual spirits. — Mr. Herbert is much better, but cannot forget Charlotte's infamy at times, which is not to be wondered at; to have only one child, and she prove abandoned, is a severe and trying affliction! Laura's tenderness makes her fearful that the gloomy reflection will continue to prejudice his health; at the same time she, with a true philosophic and religious turn of mind, thanks Providence for having produced good out of evil. — As this event, she thinks, has restored her his lost affection, which, she flatters herself, she shall retain  
in



in future. — “ Affliction, my dear Selina, said she, is a kind monitor — it draws us from the path of error—points out a future state, and the necessity of our preparing for it. This life I always consider as a pilgrimage to a better, and at periods, when I reflect on the vanity of sublunary enjoyments, and truly feel the insipidity and wearisomeness of mortal existence, I wish for a speedy dissolution; but I submit to the will of Heaven; be the period of my life long or short, the Almighty’s will be fulfilled.

I was interrupted yesterday morning by company—at which time also I received a letter from Lady Seymour, who informed me that Charles, affected at the grief of this family, had followed the runaways to Brussels, where he got a private interview with Lord Conway. To awaken his tenderness, he told him he had left Lady Conway dying with grief at Mr. Herbert’s house in town, and he feared, except he immediately repaired to her,  
 she

she would not survive the shock of the loss of him; and that Mr. Herbert also was dangerously ill, and Dr. — attended them both.—He expatiated with his Lordship on his cruel conduct, and endeavoured to persuade him to return to England, and leave Charlotte in a convent.

At Charles's first information a momentary shock was visible on his Lordship's countenance, but it soon subsided.—He answered, that his affection was firmly fixed on Charlotte, and no consideration should make him give her up. — Lady Conway deserved what she suffered, as she had not endeavoured to retain his heart, and he made no doubt of her speedy recovery, her disorder proceeding, he was sure, from her vanity being wounded, not affection to him. To prove that, we are equally firm in our resolution, continued he; you shall see Charlotte—you will find her unmoved as myself. He rung a bell,

and ordered a servant to call her.—She appeared with great effrontery, and welcomed Mr. Seymour to Brussels. He attempted, without effect, to awaken remorse in her mind. She appeared more incorrigible than his Lordship, and said, since he was only come to preach, his company would be dispensed with in future.

Thus disappointed in his hopes and wishes he set out for England, and on the road met with his acquaintance, Sir Harry Bell.—A conversation ensued concerning Miss Herbert, and the baronet made no scruple to declare, that a Mr. Murray and himself had possessed her favours in Yorkshire, which they thought was not the first she had granted. This intelligence makes Conway *rather* less guilty, as it proves she might have met him half way. Lady Seymour concludes with saying, that poor Charles, much mortified at not being able to alleviate the sorrow of his worthy friends, is going to spend some months in Ireland with his sisters.

Undoubtedly,

Undoubtedly, my Louisa, his esteem for Mrs. Herbert made him take the journey, in hopes of bringing back Lord Conway, and rousing Charlotte to repentance; but she is too abandoned and infamous to suffer the most powerful eloquence to awaken remorse in her breast. I shewed Laura the letter.—Mr. Seymour is a worthy creature, said she; we are under inexpressible obligations to him for his friendship, and I beg you will let Mr. Herbert see this letter—it will take off the uneasiness he feels at having brought her to London, since he will find by that she was before guilty, and might have exposed him as much in Yorkshire: It will likewise be some consolation to Harriot to find that his Lordship was not the infamous girl's first seducer—but that in all probability, to avoid returning to Yorkshire, she seduced him. I found Lady Conway in her dressing-room, and gave her the letter to peruse.—She was pleased at the contents, and expressed herself much

indebted to Charles for his friendship. — She said it inspired her with hopes his Lordship would soon grow weary of so infamous a woman, who, undoubtedly, would soon convince him of her propensity to prostitution, and that he would then restore her his lost affection. Her spirits are much enlivened with this intelligence, and I make no doubt she will soon be perfectly recovered.

I remember at a conversation at Bath, General C——'s saying (remark Mr. Bond was the only gentleman beside present) that the age was so depraved, he believed there were few men of rank in life but indulged themselves in illicit amours. — Some had the grace to conceal them—others made their families wretched by a public display of their mistresses, and that a virtuous woman of fortune had very little chance now of happiness in the marriage state; that the days of chivalry was the time of virtue and honour, which  
was



was then conspicuous and common. — His opinion, I think, well founded, as men of rank now seldom have religious principles, without which constancy is not to be expected in wedlock; it is a melancholy reflection, though a true one: In short, exalted characters are seldom met with in real life, and those perfect ones we meet with in novels unnatural, for human nature will be frail. Sir Charles Grandison for example, is a character not to be met with in real life, and it is my opinion, authors should paint nature as it really is. Fielding's characters are frail, but natural.

It was with sorrow I presented Mr. Herbert Lady Seymour's letter, as it was to farther criminate his daughter. — He expressed gratitude to Seymour for his kind effort, and wept bitterly at the discovery of her fixed infamy, swearing he cast her intirely from his thoughts, as there were no hopes of a reformation in her

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conduct, and that he would endeavour to forget he ever had a child.

Charles is now really gone to visit his sisters in Ireland, where he proposes remaining some months. — I wish he may meet with some amiable woman that may erase the impression Mrs. Herbert has made on his heart; but I much fear he is of too constant a disposition, and will continue to indulge a passion which may embitter his future life. Adieu—remember me to Mrs. Smith.

Yours, &c.

S. MONTAGUE.

LADY

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LADY CONWAY,

T O

LADY ALMERIA.

*The Elms.*

YOUR advice is good, Almeria. — I have laid aside sorrow, and condemn myself for having indulged it so long to the prejudice of my health. I have been guilty of folly in nursing grief, instead of considering that fretting myself to death would not alter things, but must prejudice my beauty—yet the idea of being pitied for having been forsaken, is truly mortifying. At first entering into company it must prove so; however it shall have but a transient effect on me: I should have considered Charles Seymour as one of my slaves, for the trouble he took in endeavouring to restore me Conway, had I not

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been

been so well assured of his passion for Mrs. Herbert. — He, for her sake, undoubtedly, undertook the journey to Brussels, in hopes of bringing the infamous wanton to repentance, and placing her in a cloister to restore peace to Mr. Herbert, being quite a platonic lover to his Laura. Charlotte's true character gives me hopes of Conway's return, whom I still love ; spite of all his faults, he is the only man I ever felt a real partiality for. In a few days I shall join you.—I have said nothing of our intended excursion to Tunbridge—nor shall I till I see you ; then it shall appear as a sudden proposal of yours which I accept. Adieu till we meet.

Yours, sincerely,

H. CONWAY.

MRS.

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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

LADY CONWAY.

*The Elms.*

I AM extremely sorry to find, my dear Lady Conway, that your friend has been so injudicious as to persuade you to accompany her to Tunbridge. — Permit me to say, that your late cause of sorrow is so recent, it was improper, for many reasons, that you should so soon again throw yourself into public company; and, though you behave with the strictest propriety, calumny may, perhaps, pursue you with rigour, your situation being critically delicate. Do not think, my dear Harriot, I wish you to nourish solitude and sorrow; far is it from my thoughts, but I would have you indulge cheerfulness with



a few select friends only. In all probability Lord Conway will soon be weary of the woman who has seduced his affection from you, and separation from her will bring on reflection; and if he finds you lead a retired life, love and remorse will restore him to you, a happiness I know you wish for: On the contrary, if you rush again into the vortex of pleasure, should he quit Charlotte, he will conclude you have entirely obliterated him from your memory, and wish not for his return, he will plunge into fresh libertinism, and you will lose him for ever. Forgive this severe admonition, inspired by the truest and most sacred friendship, with a sincere wish for your terrestrial and eternal happiness. Believe me, my dear Lady Conway, that the approbation of our own hearts, at the periods we are left to reflection, is a pleasure superior to the incense of coxcombs, and folly of ton. The latter pleasures are rapid, and leave a sting behind—the former, which proceeds from  
virtue

virtue and rectitude of conduct, give us a slight foretaste of Heaven.

Selina will write to you by this post; she wishes Mr. Herbert and myself to accompany her home, when it would increase her pleasure to see you; her friends there will be new objects, and, perhaps, amuse you. — From thence, if you grow weary, we will proceed to Devonshire, to diversify the same. This scheme, which will be a relief to Mr. Herbert's mind, depends entirely upon you. — If you refuse, I shall not be able to effect my purpose of amusing Mr. Herbert. — Weigh the matter well before you return an answer, as a refusal, I must confess, will be a severe mortification to me. With compliments to Lady Almeria, I remain,

My dear Harriot,

Your sincere friend,

L. HERBERT.

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LADY CONWAY,

T O

MRS. HERBERT.

*Tunbridge.*

YOU are very provoking, my dear Mrs. Herbert, to allure me from this bewitching place, which has exhilarated my spirits, and perfectly restored my health. I cannot think, notwithstanding your wise admonition, there is any harm in hearing silly fellows saying silly things to me, as it convinces me I am not yet grown old or ugly enough to be forsaken, or have caused Lord Conway's desertion.—It is an idea which gives me pleasure instead of remorse, as they cannot injure me by their flattery : However, to prove your influence over me is superior to Almeria's, and that it is my wish to oblige you

you for your past kindness, and be instrumental to Mr. Herbert's recovery of spirits, I will return to the Elms in a week's time. Till then adieu. I have not time at present to say more, than that I am

Your obliged,

And affectionate,

H. CONWAY.

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MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

*The Elms.*

**P**REPARE for our reception, dear Louisa ; we shall be with you in a fortnight.—Laura is quite happy at having effected her wish of Lady Conway's joining us, to preserve her a little longer from

a life of dissipation, which now might sensibly injure her character. We must form gay, enlivening parties for her, that she may not regret leaving Tunbridge. Neither Mr. Herbert or my dear Laura would have left the Elms, but for her sake, and I hope she will continue to be truly sensible of their care and friendship — though I fear the spirit of coquetry is so interwoven in her disposition, that it will not quit her during life. It is much to be lamented, as she would otherwise be an amiable woman. As I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you, I will now conclude myself,

Your truly affectionate,

S. MONTAGUE.

LADY



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LADY CONWAY,

T O

LADY ALMERIA.

*Villa-Burton.*

I HAVE been well entertained during two months residence here.—Once a week is a meeting of literati, which furnishes conversation till we meet again. — Genius, I observe, Almeria, forms eccentric characters.—Her votaries are always singular in their opinions and manners. We have frequent musical nights, which harmoniously wears away the hours. — What is more amazing is plenty of beaux, some of whom inform me I am not yet old or ugly. This must convince you I am not dissatisfied with my present situation, though I have not been permitted to attend the rooms at Bath, or balls, which

which are so near us. Mrs. Herbert has been this fortnight teasing us to change this place for the gloomy scenes of Devonshire ; there I cannot expect to meet with such rational and agreeable society ; and I have prolonged my stay here, in hopes Charles Seymour will return to the Rock at the period of our visit there, as he might possibly draw more company than we shall have, if alone with the old folks. One fortnight's longer stay here is the utmost I can obtain.—I should like Charles much for a cissiber, or, as Barette translates the word, a whisperer. — Such harmless creatures, as he declares cissibers to be, are pleasant companions. “ They behold women as sublime beings, a divine sovereign of the thoughts—an object of the greatest reverence, never to be approached but as an angel clad in human form.” All this is very refined and pretty.—I believe Charles feels something like it for Mrs. Herbert ; but few of our countrymen have such sublime ideas

ideas of women. He has been wonderfully kind in endeavouring to restore me Lord Conway, for which I must thank him. — A few civil speeches from him would not displease me. — You, who are my counterpart in sentiment, will not wonder at it. — We love virtue, though we love conquest, and giving pain is to us a pleasure. — Are we not to be commended, when the male wretches are so constantly rendering thousands of our yielding sex miserable? — Do we not retaliate on them, by rendering them so for a short period? Were all women of our opinion, there would be no victims for the lordly tyrants to boast of. Adieu. I shall write again from the Rock.

Yours, &c.

H. CONWAY.

MRS.

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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE

*The Charming Rock.*

I NOW sit down to perform my promise of writing to you a fortnight after our arrival here. We found Lord and Lady Seymour in perfect health, who enquired much after you.—Company was invited, but they are so dissimilar to those we have left behind, Harriot is quite out of humour and discontented. She says our family alone is too preferable to the set of stupid animals which fills the drawing-room ; in short, she grows so discontented, I fear it will not be in my power to retain her here much longer.

Two

Two events have happened, which has put Harriot in fresh spirits. You know I wished to be here during Seymour's absence ; but Lady Conway's partiality for her situation with you delayed our journey hither. I was still in hopes he would not return till after our departure, and his parents mentioned nothing more of him than that he was well.

We had been a fortnight here when Lord and Lady Seymour went one afternoon to see a friend, who they apprehended was dying. Mr Herbert rode to visit a neighbouring 'squire, and Lady Conway and myself amused ourselves with reading the Tragedy of Douglas. In the evening she proposed a walk ; I willingly complied with her request. — We went to the sea side, where she took a fancy to climb a rock. — I stood calmly surveying her.—She tore her muslin gown in several places as she ascended, and in descending fell, and made her hands and cloaths all over dirt with tangle and wet sand.

As



As she did not hurt herself, she laughed at the exploit—declaring we must enter the house at the back door on our return, that she might slip to her room unseen, and change her dress.

By the time we reached the house it was quite dark.—She retired to her chamber, and I went to the drawing-room; where I had left a guitar on the couch, which I intended to amuse myself with till she joined me. The upper shutters of the window had been shut to exclude the sun, therefore it was so dark I was obliged to grope my way, and putting my hand to feel the couch, laid it on some person's face, who was extended on it. I thought it was Lord or Lady Seymour, who was returned home, and lay still to surprise me; therefore suddenly exclaimed, Good God! you have really almost effected your purpose of frightening me, my dear Lord or Lady, for which of you it is I cannot tell.—The person respectfully  
put

put my hand to their lips, and arose, saying, pardon me, dear Mrs. Herbert, I thought at first it was one of the servants.

To my great surprise I found it was Mr. Seymour! who immediately rung for lights, and informed me, that, to serve a friend in London, he had been obliged to shorten his visit in Ireland, and had been in London three weeks, from which place, having completed his business, he had proceeded hither, and arrived soon after we left the room; that being exceedingly fatigued, and thinking we should be some time absent, he reposed himself, when he was awaked by my entrance, and supposed it was one of the servants till he felt my hand, and heard my voice.

Lights were brought, and we were again left alone. I am quite rejoiced, my dear Mrs. Herbert, said he (his eyes sparkling with pleasure, and taking both my hands, which,

which, I think, he gently pressed) at so unexpected a happiness.

I was inexpressibly hurt at his effusion of joy, and the liberty he had taken of kissing my hand.—I was willing, however, to pass his behaviour off unnoticed, as it was a sudden emotion had put him off his guard; but I suppose I looked displeased, though I spoke not, for he changed colour, and looked confused; and, fearful of having offended me, “Pardon me, Madam, added he, abroad I imbibed a warmth of manner in expressing my friendship to your sex, which I see is disagreeable to you.—Forgive me (looking down) I will avoid it in future; but, believe me, no person on earth more sincerely respects and regards you, or would with so great pleasure sacrifice their fortune or life for your happiness.”

The apology is sufficient, Mr. Seymour, said I, for I do not suppose you meant

meant to offend me.—Lady Conway, Mr. Herbert and myself, are much indebted to you for your friendly endeavours at Bruffels.

Speak not of it, said he; I was sufficiently mortified at my attempts being fruitless. Where is Lady Conway? I forgot to enquire after her before.

I informed him of the cause of her absence, and had just concluded the account of our walk, when she entered much surprised and pleased to see him. She politely returned him thanks for his endeavouring to restore her Lord Conway, and a general conversation ensued. Lord and Lady Seymour was as much surprised to see him as we had been.—He repeated what he had before said to us concerning his return to England.—They were happy he arrived to entertain us, as they hoped it would make the Rock more enlivening to Lady Conway, and we passed a very chearful evening.

What

What gave Harriot great pleasure gave me pain, as Mr. Seymour's unhappy predilection makes me uneasy in his company.—Why does he not endeavour to fly the object that embitters his present days? I made Lady Conway paint the pleasures of Tunbridge, in hopes he would be allured to leave us, and, smiling, asked, if her description did not incite him to repair to that scene of gaiety? He answered, the society of old friends was to him a more heart-felt satisfaction, than wearisome and frivolous dissipation.

Lord and Lady Seymour commended his sentiments, which accords with their own, and seemed proud of a son so worthy their affection. Alas! did they know the situation of his heart, they would unite with me in driving him away from hence during our stay here.

Two days after Mr. and Mrs. Monson arrived at their seat, called Silver Dale, with a gay party, which put Lady Conway



way into high spirits. We have had several balls.—Mr. Seymour refused dancing, to the great displeasure of Lady Conway and Mrs. Monson, who seemed to strive which should make themselves most agreeable to him. — I think he has some vanity, for in their presence (to provoke them) he offered to dance with me.—You may be certain I refused him — yet, in spite of my endeavours to avoid him, he would sit and chat with me.—Indeed, Selina, I wish much to get from hence.—I pity him. — He behaves to me with the greatest respect; but this criminal passion, I can plainly perceive at times, severely agitates him. — Virtue and reason makes him combat with it.—Why has he not the resolution to fly me? How happy should I be to find he could conquer this unworthy and criminal predilection, and transfer his love to a more amiable and younger object at liberty to make him happy; then, Selina, I might shew my friendship to him.—At present I am com-

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pelled

pelled to treat him with a prudent reserve, different to the sincere friendship I express to his Father.—Is it not distressing to think a young man, so worthy my esteem, should thus weakly surrender himself to a hopeless passion!—You, as well as me, I dare say, truly pity him, and wish that he may summon fortitude to restore his peace of mind.

Mr. Herbert is amused with society and cards, but at periods is much depressed in spirits at the reflection of Charlotte's infamy. — Unhappy girl! she has, indeed, severely embittered his latter days, and, I fear, nothing but her sincere repentance, and return to virtue, will restore his mind to its former tranquillity; it shall be my chief study, however, to lessen his sorrow as much as possible.

Adieu, my dearest Selina, I shall weary you with this long epistle. Remember me kindly to Louisa.

Yours, &c.

LAURA HERBERT.

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MR. SEYMOUR,

T O

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN.

*Belvidere Castle.*

I NOW sit down, my dear Orlando, to perform my promise to you, when we last parted at Brussels. You justly observed, that the languor and dejection of spirits which I strove to conceal, and which, in spite of my efforts to the contrary, were then too visible, must proceed from some other cause than my disappointment at not being able to separate Lord Conway and Miss Herbert. It did, indeed, my dear friend; but I was ashamed to confess my weakness to you, and feared if I did, while I confessed the influence of an unhappy passion, I might inadvertently drop the real name of the

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worthy

worthy object my heart adores. On paper I can be more cautious—for her real name you must not know till she is at liberty, and I can address her without its being a crime.

Clarinda was first introduced to our family by the late Mrs. Montague, and her daughter Selina, when I was a boy turned of ten years of age. At that period I felt something warmer than fraternal regard for her, and used to call her “My dear little love.” She was then near seventeen, tall, and elegantly formed, with regular (though not beautiful) features. — Her eyes are uncommonly expressive, and speak the sentiments of her soul.—Her hair almost black, and her skin remarkably white, which is sometimes embellished with a natural bloom:—Added to this, she was then possessed of a vivacity, which many sorrows have not intirely eradicated.

Such

Such is the woman who possesses my heart, and fills it with a passion which will continue during my existence.—We were separated ; my parents went to reside in Ireland. She remained with an aunt, who had brought her up, and was her guardian.—This aunt unfortunately became a rigid methodist, and rendered her amiable niece's life so miserable, that, to be freed from persecution, she married a gentleman called Mr. ——. This man, my Orlando, was every way unworthy of the prize he had gained.—Disproportion of years, and the misfortune of having led a debauched life, made him jealous of her ; at the same time he kept a mistress, and treated her in a manner that, to a woman whose sensibility was so tremblingly alive, was heart-felt affliction. In the interim, I several times enjoyed her company before I quitted England, and became too sensible of her worth ; and charmed with her person, and the inexpressible grace she displayed in every movement, so that



my friendship for her insensibly glided into a kind passion. She is a perfect mistress of music, and her voice is expressive, powerful and melodious! — When she speaks, it is so sweet, my soul thrills with pleasure to hear her. Lord and Lady Seymour have proposed many matches, both before my travels and since my return, which I have absolutely refused, though it gave me pain to disoblige them.

She herself has seconded their request, the only one from her I could refuse; but how could I think of marrying another while my heart, my soul, was hers, and I must have been wretched in becoming a husband, as well as, perhaps, have rendered some worthy woman miserable! No, Orlando, never will I wed another. Without hope I could not exist; and though, perhaps, at last it may prove a futile one, at present I must indulge it. In all probability she will survive Mr. —; the friendship she has always expressed

pressed for our family, which in common she has extended to me, may then, perhaps, ripen into a mutual affection, and I *may* be blest. This distant but flattering hope supports me under my present unhappy situation; and till that event happens, I shall endeavour to perform every act of friendship in my power to her and Mr. ——. The reason you found me so dispirited at Brussels was, I had left them in deep affliction, concerning a nephew of Mr. —'s, and it was not in my power to be useful to them.

My journey to Brussels, you know, was to make an effort to bring back Lord Conway (my Mother's relation) to her friend, his wife. — There again I was disappointed, and it added to my dejection of spirits.—On my return to England, restless and uneasy, I set off for Ireland. My sisters received me with affection: I intended to remain there some months; but Sophia had a letter from my Mother,

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informing her Lady Conway, &c. was there, and Clarinda was expected.—Clarinda's name roused me. — Adoring her as I do, can you blame me for the sudden resolution I formed of returning home to enjoy her dear society, and view her beloved form. I made an excuse of business in London to my sister, and repaired thither first under pretence of serving a friend—then in haste went to the Rock.

When I arrived at the latter place I found Lady Conway, and Clarinda was gone a walking, and the rest of the family were abroad on different visits. Fatigued, I threw myself on a couch in the drawing-room, and fell into a reverie, which lasted two hours. — It grew at last quite dark.—I heard a person enter, and could just perceive it was a woman about the height of Clarinda. — The palpitation I felt at heart assured me it was her, therefore I continued immoveable. Coming just from what remaining light there was without

without doors, made the room appear darker to her.—She extended her hand to feel for the couch, and (as I wished) accidentally laid it on my face.—The extatic touch was so pleasurable, it threw me almost off my guard.—I put my lips to her lovely hand.—Oh! what a happy moment! She supposed it was my Father, and said he had almost effected his purpose of frightening her; but she was still more surpris'd at the sound of my voice, and convinced of her mistake! I was agitated by passion, and incited by criminal sensations to discover my love to her under the auspice of darkness — but I mastered them, Orlando. — Respect, the constant attendant on a virtuous passion would not permit me to suffer her a moment longer than necessary to be in the dark.— Lights were brought.—I thought she looked rather confus'd, yet glad to see me. — The flattering idea, that perhaps she might esteem me again, put me almost off my guard. I seized her hands,

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and

and gently pressed them, expressing my happiness at having thus *unexpectedly* met her there. The liberty I took evidently displeased her (for every movement of her soul can plainly be discovered on her countenance;) she spoke not, but she retreated from me, and changed colour. I was in horror at the idea of having offended her, and made an apology for the warmth of my address, which habit, I said, I had acquired abroad; at the same time I murmured out something of my respect and esteem for her. She confirmed my pardon.

The blissful moments I enjoyed her conversation alone soon passed. — Lady Conway, and other company, returned home, and a pleasant evening succeeded; but that night proved to me a sleepless one. — Various sensations assailed me, and the joyful hope that I was beloved by her chased away repose. I had never before perceived any thing like a return of affection.



affection.—The sudden surprise of seeing me, I thought, had made it visibly appear, and I was by turns happy and miserable.

Just before my leaving the Rock I had the pleasure of relieving a poor family in distress, and had placed them in a cottage about two miles distant, by a little village. The morning after my return I went to see if they were settled to their wish, and if I could be of farther service to them; to my great surprise I found Clarinda seated there.—She blushed at my entrance—for her acts of charity, or intended ones, are always secret. — The grateful people fell on their knees, and thanked me for preserving them from want and misery, saying, they had just been informing the worthy Lady who came there with a charitable intent, that I had left them nothing to wish for. — Their effusion of gratitude hurt me.—I raised them, and begged they would mention it no more.

Hearts like Mr. Seymour's, said Clarinda, find the pleasure of bestowing happiness a sufficient reward.—If you please, we will visit your little garden; so saying, she rose, and I offered her my arm, as the way to it was rough and unfinished.—She accepted it with frankness, and complimented me in her elegant manner on the goodness of my heart, as she pleased to term it, so uncommon in young men of fashion.

What a delicious reward, my Orlando, was it to be commended by this adorable and virtuous woman!—The sensations I felt were serenely gratifying, and far superior to the most heightened raptures of libertine enjoyment.—Oh! her commendation (while she in a friendly manner hung upon my arm) was felicity beyond expression!—I flattered myself, perhaps, with delusive hopes: I thought I saw love, pure, refined, virtuous love, sparkle in her eyes, the utmost of my ambition in  
her

her present state, and I determined never to offend her, or risque the loss of her friendship, by letting her perceive the warmth of my affection for her. When we returned from the garden, she informed me she had left Lucy (her maid) in the glade just by, therefore insisted upon my not thinking of accompanying her back to "the Rock."—I knew her motive, and complied, though it was almost death to part with her even for an hour. Mr. —, I before told you, is much prone to jealousy.—If we had returned together, he would have supposed we had met by appointment, and rendered himself and the lovely Clarinda unhappy; for her dear sake, therefore, I am particularly on my guard before him.—We parted.

To my extreme mortification, two days after, Mrs. M—— arrived at Silver Dale with a party. — She forced herself upon us continually, and gave balls at her own house, so that we were seldom a day asunder.—

der.—She took every opportunity likewise of engaging my conversation, though I did all in my power to avoid her.—I was the more mortified at Mrs. M——'s attention, as I had last winter been drawn into a transient intrigue with her, which I suddenly broke off, as Selina had, in Clarinda's presence, reproved me for an imaginary *flirtation* only with a married woman, who I once refused to wed. Miserable, lest Clarinda should suspect the truth, I determined never more to pursue the amour with her, and left town. Mrs. M——, after her arrival here, hinted a wish for a private interview, which I waved.

I must own, Orlando, though I have had many amours abroad, the first of which my tutor imprudently introduced me to, I never received much pleasure from them, and they were always succeeded by remorse. Often have I determined never to repeat such amours, yet have relapsed.

How

How is it that our sex have less stability in point of virtue than women, and that none of us, I believe, while unmarried, refrain from transcient enjoyment of the fair sex? Was I to make the above confession to any one but thee, I should be laughed at and despised.—To thee I dare venture to transcribe my sentiments, because they are congenial to thy own, and I have often heard you declaim against libertinism; yet, oh! human frailty, we indulge ourselves at times in what we think erroneous! Why don't you marry, Orlando?—the marriage state is the only one that can render men of our opinion truly happy. The society and fond endearment of a virtuous woman, is certainly the greatest bliss on earth, I mean the possession of a female who sways our hearts. Was the dear object of my fondest wishes at liberty, and would accept me, I would marry to-morrow, and bid adieu to the rest of the sex as to love affairs. — To her I would be constant and tender.



tender.—Ah! my friend, how my heart thrills with the pleasing hope of being one day so blest!—Persecuted by Mrs. M——, who contrived to slip several notes in my hand, requesting a private interview, I almost determined to leave “the Roch;” but Clarinda’s presence always altered my resolution. Her musical abilities used to entrance my soul, and ten minutes conversation with her made me happy; how could I then resolve to leave a place which contained all my soul held dear on earth: No, Mrs. M——’s persecution I was determined to endure, and avoid her as much as possible. An incident, however, happened, which gave me resolution to depart.

Lady Seymour requested me one morning to write two letters on business for her.—I seated myself for that purpose at her dressing-table, and had just began to write, when Clarinda entered with her work.—Seeing me seated in secretair, she  
offered

offered to depart.—Her Ladyship insisted upon her staying, and I assured her it would be no interruption to me.

They had not set long before my Mother had a letter brought her.—She read it, and looked melancholy.—Clarinda said she hoped it contained no disagreeable intelligence; to which my Mother answered, with a sigh, it does, indeed, my dear Mrs. ———. This letter comes from an old and dear friend, who, like myself, has only one *son*.—She informs me, that, after some months earnest endeavours to find out the cause of a deep melancholy he was under, and an ill health, she has discovered love is the cause, and that a hopeless passion renders him miserable, and may, perhaps, shorten his days, he having conceived a passion for a married Lady.—She adds, that he declared to her, though his love is hopeless and criminal, he finds it irresistible, and that it will terminate only with his life. I pity them  
both,

both, said Lady Seymour—he is a worthy young man — how unfortunate ! — Read the letter, said she, presenting it to Clarinda—it will affect you, my dear, as much as it has done me.

In the glass I perceived Clarinda change colour exceedingly, and tremble ; the tale was apropos.

Do you not pity him ? said my Mother.

I think he is more to be condemned than pitied, answered Clarinda : His first knowledge of the Lady was after her marriage it seems ; therefore, upon feeling a sensation warmer than friendship for her, he should have avoided her company. — Absence is, in my opinion, the most rational and virtuous conduct in such a situation.—His duty to a superior Being required him to avoid her presence, since it was *extremely* criminal in him to indulge a passion for a married woman. Are you  
not

not of my opinion, Mr. Seymour ? said she, carelessly, her eyes fixed on her work. Don't you think flight the most judicious method to extinguish so criminal a predilection ? A stoic, said I, could not feel such a passion—yet, I think, a stoic only could have power to fly the object of his love.

You suppose then there is no such things as fortitude and virtue, powerful aids that form a hero. It is want of exertion causes fortitude often not to be triumphant. — This young man, for example, might, if he pleased, conquer a weakness that renders his life wretched ; but, instead of calling fortitude to his aid as well as religion to repel so criminal a passion, he weakly and sinfully indulges it — takes every opportunity of seeing her, and feeds his passion in solitude, by thinking only on the mistress of his heart.—You cannot surely defend him, Mr. Seymour, concluded she. — From what I have heard of  
the

the passion of love, said I, I conceive it very powerful, nay irresistible—and I cannot suppose that absence, or any other effort, would eradicate so fixed a predilection as Mr. Connor's. Human nature is frail.—He may wish it.—He may endeavour to drive her from his breast—but a youth of so sentimental a turn of mind can never, I think, conquer his passion; a libertine might, for they know not what true affection is.

True, said Lady Seymour (little thinking her son was in a similar situation) it is that idea makes me fear he will be unhappy during life. I will persuade my friend to take him abroad; new places and objects may amuse him a little, and who knows but he may meet with a Lady that may make life comfortable to him, though not so happy as he would have been with the object of his first choice.

Impossible! said I, so ardent a passion can never be extinguished.—Never will he



he suffer any other woman to share his name and fortune.

If he has a true regard for the Lady, said Clarinda, he should avoid her presence, since, if she perceives his passion, and has a friendship for him and his Mother, though she has no predilection for *him*, the observation that he is unhappy on her account, must give her pain. To mortify others is a severe affliction to a sensible mind, and a virtuous woman in such a situation must be unhappy, and at the same time severe, in hopes of her lover's conquering himself; but if she finds he strives to conquer a passion truly criminal (and it is my opinion a firm resolution of conquering a passion generally succeeds) her friendship and esteem for him must be heightened, and it must give her pleasure to see him happy in another's arms, who is worthy of his tenderness.

I turned my eyes towards her. — She looked pale and agitated, which my Mother

ther did not observe, as she was at the tambour frame,

I am sorry to differ with you in sentiment, my dear Mrs. —, said I; but I should despise Connor, was he to transfer his love to any other woman. My eyes met hers. — I believe they spoke tender things. — She turned hers away in great confusion, yet (on reflection *now*) I think not anger.

Clarinda had certainly spoke the sentiments of her heart. — She intended the advice for me. — She wished me to quit her. — I was wretched. — I retired to walk, and yielded myself to despair, supposing that I had been mistaken in having flattered myself I had possessed any share of her affection — and that friendship, cold friendship only, was all she felt for me!

In this gloomy reverie I had wandered far from the house, when, suddenly looking

ing at my watch, I found it was near dinner-time. — The idea she felt only friendship for me made me extremely ill. I hurried myself homewards, where I arrived in a great heat, and very faint; they were just sat down to table, and observed I was indisposed. — I could eat nothing. — A violent head-ach ensued, with a slight fever, and I was obliged to retire to my chamber. Lady Seymour, alarmed, sent immediately for Dr. White, who resides about three miles distance from the Rock. He ordered me to go to bed directly, and prescribed some draughts, which, he said, he made no doubt would restore me to perfect health in a short time, the fever I had proceeding from fatigue in over-heating myself in walking — rest therefore was the chief thing I wanted. What fools are physicians! I could have told him mine proceeded from agitation of mind only.

Our family was engaged out that evening. — Lord Seymour being assured my  
illness

illness was not dangerous, accompanied Mr. — and Lady Conway ; but Clarinda insisted upon remaining at home with my Mother, as she would otherwise be alone.

After tea Lady Seymour I found requested Clarinda to attend her to my room, saying, she was sure it would give Charles pleasure to see so sincere a friend. The latter made many excuses—but my Mother would take no denial, as she said she was sure it would exhilarate my spirits : She was forced therefore to comply.

Lady Seymour, on her entrance, enquired after my health, and said she had brought a friend to see me.—My heart palpitated with joy.—Clarinda advanced towards the bed-side.—I hope, Sir, said she, you have found benefit from repose, and that you will be perfectly well to-morrow.

Your

Your good wishes, Madam, returned I, added to the care of the best of Mothers, will, I hope, soon restore me.

Lady Seymour went to the door to give orders to a servant.—I held out my hand to Clarinda, and said, I am indebted to you, Madam, more than I can express for your friendship.

Be assured, Mr. Seymour (giving me her hand, with a grave countenance, which I had command enough over myself to retain without pressing, or raising it to my lips, though I longed for that pleasure) that I am very sorry to see you so ill, and I sincerely wish you health and every happiness.

I sighed involuntarily. — I think, my dear Mrs. —, said I, of going to Ireland soon.—At present, however, I shall say nothing of it to my Mother.—Change of air may re-establish my health.



She turned pale, and trembled, as if fearful of my saying more.—Nothing is so efficacious as change of air after illness, said she; I make no doubt of its having the desired success.

Hope again re-assumed her sway, Orlando.—In Clarinda's eyes, which met mine, I thought I discovered love and pity. You wish then to part with me, said I, in a faltering tone?

I wish you every happiness, Sir, answered she, and the chief wish of my heart is to see you speedily and happily married.

How cruel! when you know I am determined against marriage, when you —. Luckily Lady Seymour turned towards us from the door, or I was on the point of being weak enough to avow my passion, and for ever forfeit her friendship—for so well do I know the delicacy of her sentiments, that she would, after such avowal,

vowal, have thought it her duty to withdraw every mark, even of cold friendship, from me, and I should have been the wretchedest being on earth—her friendship only enabling me to endure existence. That she is convinced of my passion is evident from her late advice, and she wishes me to conquer it; but, oh! never, never, can I attempt it, or erase her from my heart. How amiable! how generous is her conduct! — I adore her the more for it, and never will I marry any other woman. — Let me now return from this digression.—Forgive me, said I, softly, as Lady Seymour advanced, if I have offended by thinking differently. — My Mother heard the two last words:—What do you differ in opinion in? said she.

On the subject of matrimony, Madam. Mrs. — is recommending the marriage state, thinking a good wife would fix my happiness, and I think at present to the contrary.—I do not say I never will marry,

but when I do, it must be a Lady I sincerely respect and love.

Certainly, my dear Charles.—I never would have you enter that state till you meet with a woman that can render you happy—yet it would give your Father and myself pleasure to see you happily settled.

I hope Lord Seymour and you, Madam, will live to see it—though I own I am rather difficult in my choice.

Too much so, said Clarinda, smiling; for I have often observed, when people are so very difficult they make a bad choice at last. If you meet with a young Lady you really esteem, who is suitable to you in point of rank and fortune, sensible and good-natured — I make no doubt you would be truly happy with her.

Without *love*, Mrs. —, impossible!  
However, to oblige you and my Mother,  
I will

I will *think* of it ; will not you shake hands for this promise ?

Certainly, said Lady Seymour, first giving me her hand :—Do, Clarinda, oblige him, to see if he will oblige us.

There, said she, extending her hand, with a smile — in hopes you will soon frankly offer yours to some Lady, I present mine in friendship to you.

Ah ! it is impossible (said I, softly, as my Mother was turning out of the room) and gently pressing her hand, I added, adieu, my dear Mrs. —, while my eyes I believe spoke the sentiments of my soul, and said, “ I can love only you.” She blushed.—I still retained her hand.—She put on a gay air ; I suppose that I might think she did not understand me, and, with a pleasing vivacity, said, Remember I am not the Lady you are to marry, for you seem absent ; so saying, she snatch-

ed away her hand, and ran out of the chamber.

She left me in an agreeable reverie : I again flattered myself she loved me, and the pleasing reflection threw me into a refreshing slumber.—The next morning I found myself much better.—In the afternoon I was permitted to drink tea with her and Lady Conway in my Mother's dressing-room — and my charmer entertained us with several delightful songs.

The following day I dined with the company below, and soon recovered my usual health, for my dear Clarinda was friendly. Mrs. M—— congratulated me on my recovery, and was so fulsomely fond and particular in her attention to me, that Lady Conway, in her volatile manner, told her, she approved of the Italian custom of Cissbos she supposed, and had fixed on me for that purpose. Clarinda blushed, and looked displeased at her



her Ladyship's noticing Mrs. M——'s conduct—while Lord and Lady Seymour gave her looks of approbation. Mrs. M——, with a splenetic countenance, tho' she strove to put on an air of indifference at Lady Conway's speech, answered, she supposed her Ladyship had formed such an intention herself, or she would not have conceived such an idea; then turned and flirted with Colonel St. Aubin. Lady Conway, pleased at having mortified her, burst into a loud laugh.—Charles, said she, in a lively manner, will you be my Cifisbo?—we are both so strictly virtuous, that I am sure no harm could ever come from it.—But as in this country I might, perhaps, lose my character (and I have a *character* to lose) I think we had better remain only *friends*.

I smiled, saying, I would willingly obey her commands—whether it was to be her Cifisbo or friend?

She was pleased at my answer (for she is a coquet, though strictly virtuous) especially as it mortified Mrs. M——, who she had taken a pique against. Mrs. M—— turned, and laughed at us both with scorn and anger; at which Lady Conway again laughed, and entered into conversation with me and Clarinda.

In the evening, most of the company being at cards, I had near an hour's conversation with Clarinda, who, when she had an opportunity to speak to me without being overheard, asked when I intended setting out for Ireland.

The question struck me speechless.—I was happy. — The thoughts of parting with her was almost death.—She observed my confusion, and said, I beg your pardon, Sir, for the impertinence I have been guilty of — it was merely an accidental question—and was rising to quit me. I laid hold of her gown to prevent her moving.

moving. — The thought of going, while you and Mr. — are here, Madam, said I, gives me pain, as it will be a very long time again before I shall enjoy your company; but as you seem to wish for my departure (sighing) I will go soon.

My reason for mentioning it, said she, rather confused, is, because I think change of air will perfectly restore your health.

It is restored, said I; Mr. —'s society and friendship, joined to yours, is all I wish for, and, while I can enjoy it, I am loth to tear myself away.

She bowed, and continued silent.

At that period Mrs. M — rose from a card table, and came towards us. — I envy your *tête à tête*, said she, and am heartily weary of losing my money.

With pleasure I resign my seat to you, said Clarinda, smiling, and will take yours

at the card table.—She accordingly went towards it, but Mrs. M——'s place was filled, and Clarinda leaned on the back of Lady Conway's chair.

Determined to be revenged on Mrs. M—— for her unwelcome intrusion, I suddenly rose, and went to a card table, but not that Clarinda stood by.

Ungrateful to fly me, said she, as I rose. Have I not sacrificed every thing for you ?

I turned back, and whispered, not for me, Madam.—Lord M——, Mr. K——, and Colonel St. Aubin, may, if they please, credit you ; - they have received favours of you prior to me, and I chuse not to *share* them.

Insolent ! said she, I will be revenged ; then rising, she went to the table Lady Conway sat at—for luckily it was she she  
was

was jealous of, not having the least idea of my love for Clarinda. — Lady Conway, said she, in a loud whisper—Mr. Seymour owns he loves you, and *has* ——. I must say no more.

Let him love on, for he will love in vain, answered she, laughing, and not observing her malevolent meaning look.

*Has* he loved in vain? said she, with a strong emphasis and looks, as if she knew to the contrary.

Lord Seymour overheard her, and observed her countenance, as he sat near. He had before considered her of too light a character to visit at the Castle, and wished to break off the intimacy between her and Lady Conway. This he thought a favourable opportunity; at the same time he was extremely angry with her for her vile insinuation. Madam, said he, Lady Conway's character is not to be sported

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with,



with, and your malevolent insinuation is false. — Charles's principles are too good to permit him to attempt seducing a Lady of virtue, and Lady Conway's heart invulnerable to any such infamous attacks. No one will believe you who know the parties; but if you take farther liberties with their names, you must account for it.

Do you insult me, my Lord, in your own house for a jest?

You have insulted my guest, Madam, and since Lord Conway is not in England, her guardian and myself will protect her from all such insidious reports, that may make his Lordship suppose her criminal, when innocent.

Clarinda looked extremely shocked, and trembled so, she was obliged to sit down. I dared not go near her, least the abandoned woman should next attack her.

Mrs.

Mrs. M——, enraged at the rebuff she met with from his Lordship, rang the bell, and ordered her carriage.—I see, my Lord, you have the rudeness to drive me from the house for a jest, said she.

Jests on such serious subjects, Madam, are not to be allowed ; if you think proper to retire, you may.

Very pretty !—very polite ! my Lord, said she, vexed to the soul.

He calmly permitted her to depart. — She held out her hand to Colonel St. Aubin to attend her to her carriage. — Lord Seymour acts with propriety, Madam, said he, turning from her.—This mortified her more than the rest.—I see Lady Conway has numerous *protectors*, said she, with a sneer, and flung out of the drawing-room in a great rage.

Lady Conway had laid down her cards, and looked much astonished and hurt at  
the

the foregoing scene.—I am quite surpris'd at Mrs. M——'s behaviour, said she, and sorry, my Lord, I should be the cause of your reprimanding her.—She could only be in jest, and it deserved not to be noticed so seriously.

It was necessary, my dear Lady Conway, to stop her licentious tongue, said my Father.—You are delicately situated, and your friends must protect you from such vile aspersions, which might be of serious consequence to your future happiness. I fear her character is very light, by her warm attention to Charles to-day, and doubt not her behaviour proceeded from jealousy at his cool reception of her fondness, and respectful behaviour to you. The company joined him in opinion — while Lady Conway, thinking of her Lord's desertion afresh, and the ill consequence which might proceed from malevolent reports, burst unexpectedly into a flood of tears, and Clarinda retired with her to her  
apartment,

apartment, the sympathetic drop rolling down her cheek.

I sat stupified.—Reflection on my folly for ever having intrigued with Mrs. M— produced severe remorse, and I condemned myself much for provoking her to attack Harriot, though at the time I repulsed Mrs. M—— I had no conception she was really jealous of her Ladyship; indeed, Lady Conway had been blameable in her vivacious flight of rallery on Mrs. M—, before, which heightened the latter's spleen, when I farther provoked her. It was necessary I should rouse myself from my reverie, which I did, and joined in conversation on the subject of the event which had just passed—but the gaiety of the evening was over, and the company soon retired.

As we were left alone, Lady Conway descended to supper; the Ladies had talked her into more composure, yet the affair  
had

had renewed her grief, and she was very grave.

When I retired to my chamber, I considered my departure was become highly necessary, on Lady Conway's account:—I therefore determined, agonizing as the thought of parting with Clarinda was, to leave "the Rock" very soon.

The next day we had a number of neighbouring gentry to dinner.—I ordered my servant to bring me a letter I had sealed for that purpose just before we sat down to table—and, after pretending to read it at a window, I informed Lord Seymour it was a letter from a friend in Ireland, who claimed my promise of returning to celebrate his ward's birth-day, who was a great heiress, and would be of age the 20th instant, and that a grand ball was preparing for the occasion.

Lord Seymour thinking the letter was just arrived, seemed not displeased at the  
summons



summons I had received, which, I said, I intended to comply with, and made apology to Clarinda and Mr. —, as well as Lady Conway for being obliged to leave them. The company rallied me concerning the heiress, which I heeded not; but I thought Clarinda looked a little uneasy, which I was not sorry for.

The next morning I was left alone with the darling of my heart. I thought it necessary to leave this place, Madam, said I, lest Mrs. M—— should take farther liberties in talking of the unfortunate Lady Conway. Miss Oburn's birth-day, therefore was some sort of a reason for my sudden departure; at the same time I shall oblige you, for I know you wish me to go.

If you would really address Miss Oburn, it would be a good reason indeed, said she, gravely, and totally silence that malevolent woman in future on the subject.

Miss

Miss Oburn, though amiable, can never cause tender sentiments in my heart, said I, with a sigh—and in the midst of gaiety I shall sigh for the worthy friends I have left behind.

You allow she is amiable, returned Clarinda, and I hope friendship will glide into love.

Never, said I, taking her hand, and looking tenderly—how can you suppose —.

She blushed.—I suppose what is very likely to happen, said she, smiling, and, to avoid conversation, seated herself at the harpsichord. Never, never, said I; but I shall leave you to-morrow.—Will you promise to continue me the honour of *your* friendship: I shall not see you again a long time.

My *friendship*, Mr. Seymour, you may be always certain of retaining, said she,  
and

and commencing a tune, continued playing till my Mother entered.

The cruel moment of separation arrived; endeavours to conceal my chagrin and depression of spirits were vain.—Lord and Lady Seymour observed it, and, fearing I was ill, desired me to postpone my long journey. I then strove more to force spirits, and, though my looks proclaimed the contrary, assured them I was well, and that I always found travelling salutary to my health. At parting Clarinda's hand trembled in mine.—She seemed affected at my apparent sorrow.—Happiness attend you, Sir, said she, my good wishes will follow you; and I think, Orlando, her eyes discovered she was sorry for my departure, though her virtue had urged it. Do not think me vain—eyes will speak the sentiments of the heart.—Hers I thought said, Spite of virtuous resolutions I love you. The thought consoled me—and during my journey the  
idea

idea of their expression afforded me comfort.

Here I found a kind reception at my unexpected return—but my heart remains at “the Rock.”—I force spirits when in company, and retire as often as possible to solitude, and the flattering hope of being beloved and happy with the charming Clarinda at some future period. This hope is in some measure criminal, though I do not wish for Mr. —’s death; yet that event alone can bring me felicity, and the possession of the object I adore.

By this time your curiosity is satisfied, my worthy friend, and you are heartily weary of my prolixity in this epistle.—Pity my errors.—You are the only one acquainted with the secret of my heart.—Bury it in your bosom, and believe I shall ever remain,

Yours, sincerely,

C. SEYMOUR.

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LADY CONWAY,

T O

LADY ALMERIA.

*The Charming Rock.*

**I**N my last I informed you of Mrs. Monson's ridiculous jealousy—her dismissal, and Seymour's departure. Reflection, with the advice of my sage friends, convince me, if I return to London, and enter into company, that malevolent woman, or some others of her stamp, may take advantage from my inclination to flirting, of traducing my character, and that (critically as I am situated) it behoves me to act with great prudence.

Cruel



Cruel Conway ! how he has imbittered my life. They comfort me with the hope that he will soon grow weary of Charlotte, and my prudent conduct will make him sue for a reconciliation, which will restore me to the world. There is much reason in what they say, and gay and giddy as I have been, as well as strongly disposed as I am at present to enjoy the pleasures of the metropolis, I will follow their advice—at least for some time.

I cannot, however, resolve to seclude myself from society, and retire to one of my gloomy country seats—but have wrote to commission Selina to hire me a house as near her as possible.—There I shall have elegant, entertaining society, for the time I passed at Villa Burton was pleasing and fleeting. I am anxiously expecting an answer; if she is so lucky as to procure me a house near her, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert will settle me in it before they go to London.

Ah !

Ah! Almeria, spite of my resolution,  
a sigh arises from the unpleasing idea of  
the pleasures I must at present forego.  
Adieu.

Yours, &c.

H. CONWAY.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.